

FROM THE PASTOR
OCTOBER 3, 2021
TWENTY SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUTDOOR SHRINES: St. Thomas Aquinas writes that grace is always built upon nature, and that God begins the first work of sanctification through the senses. That is why when we look upon beautiful art, whether it be through painting, sculpture, or architecture we are naturally uplifted. That is why sunsets at the beach or a brisk walk through the woods or parks on an autumn day are so invigorating. We are so blessed that our own parish Church is filled with so many outstanding examples of beauty. For when we look upon the mysteries with our bodily senses, we are caught up in contemplating the divine. We are blessed that even outdoors on the parish grounds we may pray before sacred and beautiful images. I am always so edified to see how many people pray before the shrine of Our Lady of Grace right at the entrance of the Church. Our Lady stands there with arms outstretched to embrace us all. She is so quick to hear our prayers and so disposed to grant our requests. During the day (from very early morning until the evening) a surprising number of people come to pray there. They may drive up in their cars and just stay there to find a little peace. On Sundays so many go there. I am particularly moved when I see a mother and her son pray there every week. Remember statues and paintings are not merely decorative. They are shadows of the reality they depict.

For the last few weeks, we have been busy refurbishing and renewing the beautiful Crucifix that stands at the Rectory Chapel. This work has been done by our faithful parishioner, Mr. Michael Lynch. He has done an exquisite job and many visit that shrine also. Please go there to pray and find the peace that comes only from the Cross of Christ.

MASS INTENTIONS: Many may see in the bulletin that each of our Masses has an intention for which it is offered. Many have Masses offered for their deceased loved ones on their anniversaries of death, birthdays, etc. In my forty years as a priest, I have served in several parishes. In one of them, there were four weekday Masses every day and all the Masses had an intention. At St. Paul's we have only one Mass on the weekdays and very often there has been no intention taken for it. How comforting it is to go to a wake carrying a Mass Card which is the promise of Christ's Sacrifice in the Mass being offered for the deceased, it is the best thing we can do for the deceased. In July two long time parishioners who were so devoted to the parish died on the very same day. And yet hardly any Masses were requested for

the blessed repose of their souls. Please do not forget the deceased. These Holy Souls depend upon our prayers and suffrages. As we do each year there will be a special Mass offered on the First Saturday of November (November 6th) at 9.00AM for all our parishioners who were called into eternity during the past year.

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.”*

LAST SUNDAY: Due to delivery difficulties the bulletin of last week was only available for the 10.30 Mass. Last week’s bulletin is also available today for those who may wish to have it. Last Sunday September 26th was the day scheduled for Bishop Murphy to visit St. Paul’s, celebrate the 10.30 Mass, and enshrine the relic of St. Paul in the altar. Due to schedule conflicts, the Bishop’s visit has been postponed and will be rescheduled.

BLESSING OF ANIMALS: It is the custom to bless the animals near the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi which is celebrated each year on October 4th. The blessing of animals for this year will be Saturday October 2nd at 10.00AM and Monday October 4th (the feast itself) at 4.00PM Please bring your animals to the plaza in front of the Church.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda