

From the Pastor:

This weekend's Gospel story of the vine and the vine grower is basic to our understanding our lives as Christians. This story is so important that it is part of Jesus' farewell discourse at the Last Supper. Jesus is instructing his disciples about their relationship with him and with his Father - Jesus is, himself, the vine and those who believe in him are the branches. The vine, the trunk does not produce fruit. It is the branches, Jesus' followers, who bear the fruit. But the branches are only able to do that **because of the life they receive from the vine**. "Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me." In the story there is also the vine grower - Jesus' Father, our Father, God. The vine grower ensures that the vine and branches produce the best fruit. This means that at times the vine must be pruned. With pruning, unproductive branches are removed so that the life and productive power of the vine can more successfully produce good fruit. Now, you and I benefit from hearing and reflecting on this story of Jesus. Let our good actions and good deeds help others to reflect on Jesus, the vine!



At St. Joseph's in Scotia the total for the Rice Bowl collection was \$324. Thank you to all who made Lenten sacrifices to help serve others. When we have the final tally for Our Lady of Grace I will share it here. I am grateful to simply see generosity from so many of you – thank you.

Congratulations to our young brothers and sisters from the parish of Immaculate Conception who celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation last Saturday. They will make First Communion on Saturday May 8. Next Saturday, our young ones from the parishes of St. Joseph and Our Lady of Grace will celebrate First Reconciliation and they will receive First Eucharist on May 15. My gratitude to the families of our children who make this investment in faith, and also to our dedicated catechists and catechetical leaders, **Madeline Fretto, Michele De Lorenzo, and Roberta Quinn**.

Last Tuesday, we were blessed to have **Bishop Scharfenberger** at Immaculate Conception to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the young adults of Immaculate Conception. On Tuesday, May 11, our Bishop will return to Immaculate Conception to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with our young adults from St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Grace. This is an important step in every person's faith journey as they commit to and embrace their faith more deeply. Please pray for our young people, their families and sponsors, our catechetical leaders **Christine Goss and Grace Fay**, along with all the catechists who have brought these young adults this far. Bless you all!

Many people are wondering what is going on with our three parishes as a family of parishes. As this is a new mode of operation for the diocese as well as for all of us, it is a work in progress. In terms of changes and timetables, things do go slowly, but that is ultimately in God's hands. We are doing our best to try to move ahead in unity and hope. Some of you have asked me about mass schedules and if they might change. Given that Fr. Joe O'Brien is leaving us to assist the diocese and prepare for a new assignment, our weekend presider list becomes Fr Jack Varno and me. As we continue to have more people at mass when Covid regulations begin to loosen, we will have to address how to accommodate our collective needs. Right now there is nothing concrete to report, but our three pastoral councils will meet to work on this task with me. Be assured I will inform you all as soon as we have clarified the schedule, which is not likely to change until September.

As with so many places, we are being asked to do more with less and that will require us all to open our hearts and be more flexible. I appreciate your concerns and I develop solutions that will work for us for the greatest good of the Kingdom. It is a challenge to want to provide you with some updates when they are not yet concrete, but I hope you understand. Thank you for your ongoing and generous support to our three faith communities.

Until next week, be well, do good deeds, and say your prayers.

Fr. Jerry