

Bulletin Letter July 18, 2021 16th Ordinary Cycle B

From the Pastor:

It has been a beautiful gift to celebrate masses in each of our locations and see one another face to face. We were separated – physically anyway – for such a long time. We started online, then slowly to in-person, but with social distance and masks. This has been such a process and has taken a long time.

Before mass started one of our young parishioners excitedly told me that he was going on vacation **"for the first time in a long time."** I think he's about ten years old! **"A long time"** has a different meaning for me being many times older than he is! Fortunately for us, it's summer and COVID-19 seem to be relatively under control, although we need to be very mindful of that Delta variant. Many of us are thinking of vacation – a change of pace, a getaway. There is a reason God invented "time off" way back in the Book of Genesis. We all need time off - time away!

This brings me to our gospel this week. The apostles have returned to Jesus after being out on their own with their walking sticks and sandals. They reported to him all that they had done and taught. So Jesus says to them **"Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile!"** they have a "take a break moment!" They attempted to get away but the crowds are many and always desperate for Jesus' attention. When someone is desperate, Jesus will always respond to the need. One lesson for us in the Gospel is that there is **always work to be done**; we don't need to do it all or certainly not do it alone, but we must respond.

The gospel today doesn't tell us that life is a heroic solo endurance test, and it also doesn't tell us that it's fine to sail away when problems feel overwhelming. What we are told is to keep returning to where God is, and to remember that God is here to help us. It is my hope that you all have an opportunity to get away, see and do something new. However, I hope that as you look back on your busy schedule and busy lives, you realize that Jesus will load you in the boat and help relieve you from the impression that you are rowing by yourself.

Thank you to **Tom Bigos, Paul Buckley** and **Bob Vielkind**, who have been changing over 80 bulbs in the church of Immaculate Conception. It is a big job, as the ceiling is so high and we are grateful to have them doing it.

David Wetzel, our Director of Administration and Finance, has hit the ground running! He has been busy visiting the other parishes to explore the buildings and grounds thanks to the help of Jim Repice at OLG and Scott Sutherland and Tom Neals at St. Joe's. He has done the same at IC with Chris Belrose and is excited to get things organized, and move all three of our parishes ahead. Christine Goss is working on getting ready to interview coordinators and to get catechists on board. If you are interested in a job or in being a catechist, let her know!

Another change is taking place in the parish office at IC. **Fran Szpylczyn** has had her role redefined and she will be letting go of some of her tasks, which will be picked up by **Michele DeLorenzo**. Fran is now responsible for some liturgical and sacramental work around baptisms, weddings, and funerals at Immaculate, as well as handling all purchasing for the three parishes. **Kathy Friscic** continues on in her position as bulletin editor and the keeper of many church records.

You may wish to note that we have **cancelled Adoration** of the Blessed Sacrament on weekdays for the summer months.

Please consider joining Patty Neumann and Grace Fay on Monday, July 19 at 7 pm for the latest virtual retreat: **Following, Stumbling, and Returning to God**. Contact Grace for more information and to register: emeraldcello87@gmail.com.

I'd like to take a moment to remind everyone - myself included, that these are times of vast change around our three churches, and for many of us it might feel unsettling or challenging. Like the Body of Christ itself, we are many members of one body. This brings to mind the Marty Haugen hymn, "*We Are Many Parts*." The entire song resonates powerfully at any time, but especially now, as we journey together. These specific lyrics are on my mind right now... ***"So my pain is your pain too, In your joy, is my joy too. All is brought together in the Lord. We are many parts; we are all one body."*** It is my hope and prayer that we are all praying for one another and asking God for open hearts and minds. This is not meant to address anything specific, but rather to point out that we are all in this together and God is with us on every step of the way.

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

Fr. Jerry

OUR PRAYER: Loving God, be present to us and grant us wisdom, so that we, who may feel anxious about change, might trust in Your love and rest in the Changelessness that is You.