

From the Pastor:



Church is not the same today as it was in February of 2020. It won't be the same in the future as it was in the past. This is a challenge, especially if we are clinging to a perceived golden age that we want to restore or retain. That is no more possible than trying to hold onto the precise version of the person you married, the infant you once held in your arms, or your own face in the mirror. The present hour is a ship sailing away from the dock, and none of us gets to remain on these shores for long. The disciples had to deal with many changes in circumstances and practices during and immediately after the life of Christ. At first, he seemed like a sure bet - healing the sick, teaching up a storm. Hitching their wagon to his rising star seemed promising, but in a few years' time, the rising star was denounced and shamefully executed, doubted, and deserted by many. Yet we still follow that Lord Christ today, and I hope you will remain with Him and with us as well. I add these words from W.H. Auden who wrote: **"To choose what is difficult all one's days, as if it were easy, that is faith."**

Speaking of what changes and what remains the same, circumstances continue to change for us as a three parish family. How many times have I spoken about the change of mass schedule only to be blindsided by unforeseen challenges? Now with the COVID-19 variant rearing its ugly head, and a change in our staff, the weekend mass schedule has to be revisited once again. On the weekend of **September 11 and 12** the mass schedule will be as follows: **Saturday, 5 pm mass (confessions at 4-4:30) at Immaculate Conception; Sunday morning 9 am mass at St. Joseph's and 9 am mass at Immaculate Conception, and 10:30 am mass at Our Lady of Grace.** This is subject to change if for some reason we are down to one priest. Ideally, I wanted the schedule to be such that one priest could cover all the masses at the three parishes. But, since we could not come to an agreement, this is our best option. Please be patient and let's see how this new schedule works out.

As we all know, the ravages of the Delta variant are wreaking havoc with our lives. While our prayers are important, so are our actions. Pope Francis released a video message the other day that said, **"Thanks to God's grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19."** He added, "They grant us the hope of ending the pandemic, but only if they are available to all and if we work together." Many of us are vaccinated, but some of us are not. I urge everyone to prayerfully act in the interest of our communal health and well-being to consider the words of Pope Francis and get vaccinated. Jesus asked us to live for one another, to do so is to offer the gift of life.

How can I thank you all for the many gifts you each pour forth for our parishes? Your time, talent, and treasure are all evident at each worship site. It is a tough time for many, but I will ask you to consider and reconsider what you are able to do. It is difficult for me to ask you for more when we are all doing with less. If every person reading this gave an extra dollar, our resources would grow. With the reconfiguration of the three parishes if you cannot offer more financially, we would so gratefully receive your time and talent to our parish family! I would also like to suggest **electronic giving** as way to offer consistent support, and be sure your gift goes directly to the parish to which you are registered. This is especially important as you and your family may need to attend another church because of your personal schedules and the change in the schedule of the three communities, or any other reason. Thank you so much for all you have done, and thank you for what will be. I am forever grateful.

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.