

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the 1970's there was a very popular column in the San Francisco Chronicle called the "Tales of the City." Its author, Armistead Maupin, chronicled the imaginary goings-on of "Barbary Lane", located in Telegraph Hill. The tales reflected the typical lives of people moving to the City during that time and that of the wealthy elite who dominated the social, political and economic life of San Francisco. Anyone who grew up in San Francisco and the Peninsula at that time could identify with some aspect of this story. Maupin's column was so popular that in the 1980's "Tales of the City" was turned into a movie series. I think one of the reasons so many people identified with this story was its sense of community and the coming together of disparate experiences to make a life together.

I share this story to highlight another which comes much closer to home. On July 12, 2020, longtime St. Pius parishioner Domenica "Skip" Baxley passed away. I had the great privilege and grace to perform the sacrament of Last Rites for "Skip" a few days before her death. It was wonderful to speak with "Skip" and her loving daughter, Suzie, who took such good care of her mother the last five years of her life. On Sunday, July 19th, friends gathered for a remembrance of Domenica's life on what would have been her 95th birthday. Each of the speakers, some very powerful and emotional to the point of tears, spoke of the very special place called "Rosemary Lane."

They spoke of neighbors taking care of one another, some from generation to generation. Several of our well-known and active parish families live on Rosemary Lane. They spoke of older neighbors babysitting or watching out for younger families. As I listened to their stories, I was overcome with a sense of gratitude. Amidst all of the negativity we hear from the secular media, the mistrust which seems orchestrated to tear apart and divide every sector of our society, here were neighbors reflecting upon the most important and meaningful aspects of a healthy, happy, worthwhile life. It is about watching out for one another, supporting others in a spirit of true concern, growing in life-affirming relationships.

I was honored to offer a prayer for Domenica's repose and commending her to God's tender mercies. I reflected in my prayer about the call for us to be brothers and sisters to one another, and how we can all be thankful and grateful that God brought this wonderful woman our way. This is one example, but in our St. Pius family and larger community, we are blessed by countless people who are loving, generous, seeking to make a good life for themselves and their families. We are indeed, as the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. said, bound together in a spirit of mutuality. My prayer uttered that evening is one I pray daily for each of you, our parishioners and members of our parish family: to stay strong and healthy, to grow stronger in our faith and to always strive to deepen our spiritual lives and the grace-filled gift of grace given to us by our loving and benevolent God.

I would please ask that you remember in your prayers Sister Mary Peter Travis, O.P. Sister Mary Peter, a Dominican Sister of Mission San Jose, was one of the preeminent Catholic educators of the late twentieth-century whose influence extended far beyond the Catholic world. Sister became an associate professor and then director of the internationally known Institute for Catholic Education Leadership at the University of San Francisco. We worked alongside the late Father Ed McDermott, S.J., and they influenced education in innumerable ways. Sister Mary Peter served at USF for thirty years and retired in 2006. It was a privilege to know her and I extend my condolences to her family and Dominican Sisters.

Yesterday, St. Pius was honored to welcome Archbishop Cordileone and our archdiocesan family as he ordained Father Ben Rosado and Father Ian Quito to the sacred priesthood. We congratulate them and pray for them as they begin their priestly ministry, Father Rosado as Parochial Vicar of St. Matthew's Church in San Mateo and Father Quito as Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Carmel Church here in Redwood City. Next Saturday, August 8th, the Archbishop will be here for the ordination to the Transitional Diaconate of four seminarians, including our very own Brother John Hwang. Please continue to pray for our priests, seminarians, and those discerning a call to the Sacred Priesthood and consecrated life.

Fr. Tom