

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last Saturday, I had the great grace and privilege of celebrating Mass with Archbishop Cordileone and eleven brother priests on the plaza outside of St. Mary's Cathedral. The faithful gathered in groups of twelve around twelve altars. August 22 is the Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In honor of the Missionaries of Charity sisters serving throughout the Bay Area, this mass was offered through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When Mother Teresa began her work with the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, India, she did so through the intercession of Our Lady's Immaculate Heart and which the Archbishop consecrated for the protection of the Archdiocese three years ago. It was impressive to see so many Sisters and lay faithful gathering together in the City to bear witness to the presence of Christ in our midst. As we all feel, it has been difficult not to worship together in person. We are a sacramental Church which gathers in community to celebrate the Eucharist. I am incredibly grateful to our staff and parishioners who have exercised patience and perseverance during these months. It is in these times of difficulty when we need to rely on our faith to see us through. Our personal witness to being "graceful under pressure" and being people of hope is helping our parishioners in many ways!!!

My sincere thanks to all our parish family who joined us for our celebration of our patronal feast last Sunday. It was truly a glorious day! In my homily, I noted that the Church has a great and rich patrimony - history, tradition, buildings, beautiful art and liturgy. We are very blessed that God has given us these gifts which help to elevate our hearts, minds, and spirit to heaven. At a time such as this, it is easy to become discouraged that we are not able to celebrate Mass in a familiar church building. This reminds us of the special connection we have to a sacred space which has brought so many blessings to us...in the ordinary routine of life, in milestone celebrations of joy and even in the sorrow of burying loved ones or finding solace in difficult times. Yet, as our 9:30 Mass bore witness, the Church is the living embodiment of her people. This was so powerfully reflected in the sacraments we celebrated that day.

We welcomed into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism Kayley Max O'Rourke Crueldad. Kayley is the beautiful daughter of Ken and Shelley, who is our longtime Kindergarten teacher. It was my honor and privilege to witness their marriage here at St. Pius just a few short years ago. We also welcomed Siena and Julian Winegar, two young children who were already baptized but, through their profession of faith, were welcomed into the Roman Catholic Church. Juliana Garcia received her First Holy Communion. This was particularly fitting as we celebrated the solemnity of St. Pius X, also known as the pope of the Eucharist. It was he who established the sacramental practice of giving First Holy Communion to children. Our patronal feast was unique in many ways: it highlighted the rich history of our parish, of which we are all justly proud, but also highlights that our community continues to grow as we welcome new members.

I would once again like to express my sincere thanks to all who supported the Archdiocese during our Ordination Masses over the first three weeks of August. In addition to our amazing staff who gave generously of their time (Judy Giacometti, Cathy Yee, Elvira Cabahug, Kristin Bright, Amador Maldonado, Gary Castelli) I wish to acknowledge our parishioners who also gave graciously of their time: Katia Barrett, Bob and Nicole Beggs, Gino Burazon, Jerry Burazon, Mary Chacon, Alan DalMaso, Ronnie Guisti, Ryan Herbst, Stephanie Herbst, Denise Kirksey, Dolores LaCasse, Jose and Josie Lucatero, Susan and Nikki Manese, Evelyn Martin, Barbara Mosso, John Philpott, Stephen Philpott, Anthony Price, Greg Ramies, Jim Rodondi, Donna Schreiber, Bob Sullivan, Lupe Tuitupou, Raul Velez, Rodney Yee and Colby Zeltmann. You are each true examples of the MAGIS in action!! Also, kudos to Bob Sullivan who made the new altar which was used by Archbishop Cordileone during the diaconate ordination Masses and which now graces our Sunday outdoor Masses. This is fine work which elevates the beauty of our liturgies.

If you walk around the campus, you will notice that the fire lanes have all been repainted. I want to thank in a very special way Jeff Gray, who has made this possible. On several successive Sundays, even with the hot weather, Jeff has stripped off the old paint and replaced with a new coat. This work is very labor-intensive and his craftsmanship is superior. His effort is truly a labor of love and I would ask our parish family to join me in thanking Jeff for his outstanding work and commitment to St. Pius X!

It is fitting to acknowledge the outstanding commitment rendered by members of our parish community in light of today's Gospel reading. The disciples were jarred by Jesus' revelation of his impending passion and death. Naturally, they didn't want to hear this message and Peter articulates their discomfort. The disciples do not yet understand the mission for which Jesus was sent: to suffer, die, and rise again as expiation for our sins. Jesus rebuked Peter and said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do!" Indeed, it was not until much later that Peter came to know so intimately the redemptive nature of Jesus's Incarnation. As human beings, we often preoccupy ourselves with self-preservation which includes avoiding anything which inconveniences us. Jesus came to show us the way of sacrificial love; in our Christian context, that means letting go our ourselves. In this way, God's dwelling within us makes us less self-serving and more disposed to giving of ourselves freely in the service of the kingdom.

Jesus reminds us of some essential elements in living as his disciples: we must exercise self-denial, pick up the suffering that comes with carrying the Cross and then follow Jesus. Indeed, for those who live these maxims will experience the fullness of God's glory. Let us not be afraid to embrace sacrifice and suffering; the ways in which we accept these challenges in our own lives can be examples of hope and optimism for our brothers and sisters in our midst.

Fr. Tom