

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we begin this new year of 2021, I invite us to do so under the patronage and protection of St. Joseph. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has given the Church the great privilege and grace of this year of St. Joseph. In the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* on the 150th anniversary of the Proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis wrote:

“My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others.

They understood that no one is saved alone...How many people daily exercise patience and offer hope, taking care not to spread panic, but shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday ways, how to accept and deal with a crisis by adjusting their routines, looking ahead and encouraging the practice of prayer. How many are praying, making sacrifices and interceding for the good of all. Each of us can discover in Joseph, a man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence - an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due them all.” **Amen!**

I have reached out to members of our parish staff and community and have suggested that we offer a series of talks and reflections on spirituality and its application to practical experience of everyday life. Evangelization is critically important, especially since we have not been able to be together - many of us now - for over nine months. I would like to focus on, among other topics, the importance of fatherhood and parenthood and their importance in the religious formation of children; the rights and dignity of working men and women and how the Church affirms this with its writings and teachings on this very important subject; highlighting the conversion journeys of several parishioners who have entered the Church and whose stories are remarkable for their depth and hope; offering our children and young people the opportunity to express to our wider spiritual family why faith is important to them. I see this venue of using multimedia as an opportunity to show that we are a vibrant and very-much-alive community with an incredible story to be told and to share our faith. We will also offer Spanish-speaking opportunities as well. If you have any ideas you would like to share, please feel free to contact Father Edgardo, myself, and members of our parish staff including the school.

I have also begun exploring the idea of establishing small faith communities which are very effective in the Hispanic community and were one of the features in the past through our parish's participation in the RENEW program. I believe that small groups of familiar faces with shared life experiences and aspects in common can help us to grow stronger as a community of faith. There are several excellent evangelizing tools available and I am working with Father Patrick Summerhays at the Archdiocese on this idea. I am so grateful to those who, upon hearing of this proposed idea, have offered to lead it!

As we conclude the liturgical season of Christmas on the Baptism of the Lord, I wish to express my gratitude and humble thanksgiving to all who made our solemnities during this time so beautiful and reverent. It is simply breathtaking to observe the work of so many generous volunteers. Working together in harmony and with a spirit of enthusiasm and joy was especially important during these difficult days. I will be highlighting in a bulletin in the near future those who volunteered and supported our liturgies. I am also grateful for the incredible generosity of our parishioners who provided gift cards totaling over \$10,000 (!) to the needy in addition to food donations. Our ever-capable Allison Benjamin and her family helped to coordinate the distributions of the gift cards. Many, many thanks! Thank you too for the generous financial donations given to buy flowers through a second collection for Christmas flowers and to Mr. Al Stanley and Crippen & Flynn Funeral Directors who once again donated the bulk of the poinsettias.

Our beautiful liturgies would not have been possible without the diligence and hard work of our parish staff, most especially Cathy Yee and Tony Eiras. The music was truly outstanding and thanks to all our musicians and choir members. Thanks to our extraordinary Environment Committee which spent countless hours planning and implementing our beautiful sanctuary and exterior; our livestreaming technical trio of Ryan Herbst, Raul Velez and John Philpott; our lectors; our always faithful Master of Ceremonies Oscar Ortiz and altar servers Matthew Molinelli, Dayana Torres and Jacob Corradetti. I am also incredibly grateful to our parish staff for their dedication and selfless generosity - and good humor - during this time.

May we continue live our baptismal call to bring the Good News, the light of Christ, into the world!

Fr. Tom