

Dear Parish Family,

If we were able to give God a call on our mobile phone, I believe that it would not go to voicemail. Why do I believe that? I believe it because I know that God is available to all of us all the time, as we grow in our relationship with in Him.

In Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians, chapter 3, verse 13 Saint Paul writes: "***Brethren, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.***"

While we may feel tempted at times to "take cover" until the storms of life are over, I would encourage all of us to use these challenging times to take our faith to another level! "Reaching forward" as Saint Paul wrote, means we are willing to step out of our comfort zone and move into areas that may be different than what we are used to, but we know there's more! We cannot live only on the blessings of our past, but we can use them as launching pads to the new thing God wants to do in us.

Recently in the New Jersey Herald there have been articles talking about the "Nones" those folks in our society who, for whatever reason have left organized religion and why others defend their faith communities. I believe it is important for all of us to practice our faith. I believe in the importance of being in God's house or at least watching the Mass online at home if possible. Despite the feelings of some, we need spiritual motivation and inspiration to move forward in life, without that we will just crumple.

Often people will say that Mass is "boring," or "I don't get anything out of it." This struggle happens to all of us at one time or another. Yet it is also an indication that we are "out of shape" so to say when it comes to the importance of weekly Mass attendance. Practicing our religion, growing in our faith, receiving the Eucharist as often as we can is a personal and communal experience. Sure it is easy to get sidetracked at Mass and start thinking about what we have on the plates of our lives at that present moment or what we have planned for later in the day; but as we gather at Mass we must try and refocus on what is on our minds, and listen, really listen to the words of the Mass.

At the Mass we are not spectators, like at a sports event - No! That folks is what makes Mass boring. At Mass we are participants, who pray, sing, listen to what God is trying to say to us, and we receive the greatest gift we could ever receive - the Body of Christ. This participation of praying, singing, listening and receiving allows God to lift us up to where we cannot go on our own. When we practice our religion, when we grow in our faith, we discover that Mass or going to Church is far from boring; rather it is a personal/communal experience where we get touch with God and God gets in touch with us. So, for those of you who have not been to Mass lately - I hope and pray to see you soon and always remember that our God is a wonderful, a miracle-working God who, as said at the beginning of this e-mail, is available to all of us all the time, as we grow in our relationship with in Him.

Stay well! Stay Safe! Stay the course in protecting each other from the COVID virus.

Enjoy these autumn days!

In His Love,

Father John