

BY THE WAY . . .

- This has been a stressful week for me because we resumed teaching classes in the Seminary on Monday. We are using what is called a “hyflex system.” The room that I teach in is now designated for only twelve “live” students observing social-distancing norms. But there are sixteen students in the class. This means that each week, on a rotating basis, some of the students will attend class remotely by means of a camera in the classroom hooked up to my laptop computer. Problem: 1) I did not have a laptop until three days ago; 2) I am severely **technologically challenged** (until yesterday I still thought that “chicklets” referred only to a form of chewing gum).

I arrived more than an hour early this morning, hoping against hope, that I would be able to get this all set up. For once, I remembered the right password (on only the fourth try!) and with the help of a student, got myself all set up and actually began teaching the class. About forty minutes into the class there was an excited knock on the door. One of the “remote” students was there from the other building to inform me that I had lost all the remote students a few minutes earlier. When he looked at the maze of equipment near the podium and checked it out, it only took him only a minute to deduce what the problem was: I had never plugged my laptop into the electrical socket on the wall! (What’s the use of a portable computer if you still have to plug it in?). Later, recounting my experience to the academic dean, he consoled me by telling me that I was not even close to being the least tech-savvy professor on the faculty. Thank God.

And next week we get to open up Saint Anthony’s School!!!

- Because of dwindling attendance during the last year, as well as all the challenges presented by our Covid 19 accommodations, we have decided, at least for the time being, not to bring back the **6:00 P.M. Sunday Night Mass** at this time. If circumstances change, we can revisit this decision.

I want to say a special **word of thanks** to the parishioners who have provided music for this Mass over the last several years: Pat and Erica Lobascio, John and Mary Peragine, Paula Hoffman, and Regina DiMatteo. One of the highlights of Sunday night Mass for those who were regular attendees, was the prayerful, quieting, soothing musical atmosphere this group provided before and during the liturgy week after week. On behalf of all our parishioners I thank them for their generous sharing of their talents.

- Monday, September 14, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross will mark the first of the series of **Monthly Eucharistic Holy Hours** for the 2020-2021 season at Saint Anthony’s. These monthly holy hours are an opportunity to spend some quiet time in reflective prayer before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This Friday’s Holy Hour will be a time of prayer for Saint Anthony’s School which begins its school year this week as well. Friday’s Holy Hour will be both live (in the church) and live streamed at 7:30 P.M.

The next Holy Hour will be on Tuesday, October 6, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

- On Tuesday, September 15, we will welcome our new Bishop, Kevin J. Sweeney, for the celebration of the **Sacrament of Confirmation**. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this celebration will be a little different from previous Confirmations. We have 68 candidates for the Sacrament. Based on that number, Bishop Sweeney has graciously consented to celebrate the Sacrament twice that night, at 6:00 P.M. and again at 8:00 P.M. In order to keep to our present limit of 100 people in church, properly distanced, we have decided that the candidates and their parents alone will be present in the church. While each of the candidates will have a sponsor, the sponsors will not be physically present in the church. Rather, the parents will stand in as proxies for the sponsors. (In the 1960s and 1970s we routinely used proxies – usually one man for all the boys and one woman for all the girls – because we could not fit everyone in church). This arrangement will allow us to fit one family group in each pew, and still allow us to follow the capacity and distancing restrictions. I am grateful to everyone for their cooperation in allowing us to follow the guidelines. Both the Confirmations will be live streamed.

- **A Prayer for our Earth** written by Pope Francis (September 1 was World Day of Care for Creation).

*All powerful God you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
For justice, love and peace.*

God bless you all,
Father Ray