

## BY THE WAY . . .

- This Tuesday we have the pleasure of welcoming Bishop Kevin J. Sweeney, our new bishop, to Saint Anthony's for his first visit to administer the **Sacrament of Confirmation** to sixty-eight of our younger parishioners. Please remember these young people in your prayers over this week.

- 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.

- This past week I received a notice from Bishop Sweeney informing me that he had appointed **Deacon Ronnie Gonzalez** to serve at Saint Anthony's Parish. Deacon Gonzalez is the latest in a line of seven permanent deacons who have served with distinction in the diaconal ministry at Saint Anthony's over the past forty years. We are happy to welcome him to our staff with the hopes and prayers for a long and fruitful ministry among us.

- **The Bishop's Annual Appeal** is getting a facelift. (Or more like a "name lift!") The name of the Bishop's Annual Appeal has been changed and will now be known as the **Diocesan Ministries Appeal**. So, if you get a letter from Bishop Sweeney in the next week or so asking you to support the Diocesan Ministries Appeal – please know that this is the new name of the Annual Appeal. While the name has changed, the work of the Diocesan Ministries Appeal will continue to focus on the important ministries that it always has and will continue to serve thousands of people throughout the Diocese. Thank you for your support!

- This past Thursday was the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our second pastor, **Father William E. Thompson**, who died in 1951. Father Thompson is the one who led the parish in the construction of our beautiful parish church. The beautiful window of the Coronation of Mary near the entrance to the sacristy was his gift to the parish.

- This weekend, the weekend after Labor Day, is traditionally when Saint Francis Church in Hoboken (the Frank Sinatra church), holds its annual festival and street procession in honor of the *Madonna dei Martiri* from the church to the Hoboken waterfront. (Maybe in another offering I can tell you about the origin of this Marian devotion – it has traveled from Constantinople to Molfetta, Italy to Hoboken). Anyway, I knew a woman, Cathy, who for many years had been the soloist who sang the traditional hymn to Mary as part of the festival.

When Cathy became ill with cancer, I went to visit her in the hospital. When I arrived, I was surprised to see her whole family gathered in the hospital room. Her husband and three daughters and their families were all there, and her son was racing down from Providence,

Rhode Island to be present as well. I did not realize how quickly her situation had deteriorated, and that the day I chose to visit was actually going to be her last day.

They say that sometimes God grants you the grace to manage your own death, and I saw something of that in this case. Around Noon, despite labored breathing, Cathy told her family it was time for lunch and they should all go downstairs to the hospital cafeteria to get something to eat. Of course, they all demurred and said they would stay in the room with her. At that point Cathy summoned her whole maternal strength and said, in so many words, "Look, Frankie is still more than an hour away and I'm not going anywhere until he gets here. This is going to be a long day for all of you, and you're going to need your strength. Now go downstairs and get something to eat." And they all trusted God and her, and they obeyed.

It has been a long time since some of you have received **Holy Communion**. Our church has been reopened for Mass since June, and attendance has slowly been growing. There are many reasons why many of you should still prudently refrain from coming. Still others have simply become comfortable "attending" Mass from home. But, without the Eucharist it is not the same thing. If you are prudently able to come physically to Mass, you should come.

The days ahead of us are going to be long ones, and we need our strength. Come to the table of the Lord, and get something to eat!

- Wednesday of this week is the **Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows**. This Marian image is common in many churches throughout the world, especially in Latin America. It takes on several manifestations – from the traditional *Pieta* made famous by Michaelangelo, to an image dressed in black lace with swords piercing her heart (Luke 2:35) to the image of Mary standing beneath the Cross (John 19: 26-27).

The world over, devotion to the Sorrowful Mother is a source of comfort and hope, especially for those mothers, often indigenous, whose children have been murdered or are among the "disappeared." The Virgin of Sorrows stands near parents of children who are on death row or who have been separated from them in their attempts at immigration. In our global context of intense human suffering, Our Lady of Sorrows functions as an icon or sacrament of God's maternal self-giving, and co-suffering love. She inspires us to a greater faith and trust in Christ crucified.

*Jesus, may her deep devotion  
Stir in me the same emotion,  
Source of love, redeemer true.*

God bless you all,

Father Ray