

Dear Parishioners,

As we gather to celebrate Mass virtually this coming Sunday, the third Sunday of Easter, I take the opportunity to welcome our many parishioners and friends who join us from different places and spaces. This weekend in particular, I am reaching out to our Special Needs families whom we miss very much. I do hope that when it is safe, we will be able to have them back to Mass at St. Luke and spend time sharing stories and having some fun activities. Our eight RCIA candidates are also joining us today virtually from the outdoor chapel after Mass; we will join them for an educational piece while at the same time maintaining social distancing. Our candidates are eager to receive their sacraments and I look forward as quickly as possible to baptizing our two non-Christians and bringing our two former Protestants into the Catholic faith, giving Holy Communion to our three Catholics who have never before received the Eucharist and Confirmation to all eight. As soon as possible we will be in touch with our First Communion families and our Confirmation families with a date for these joyful celebrations.

Early Monday morning, I received a telephone call that the Tobin residence here in town was on fire. Dottie Tobin, the widow of Tracy Tobin had been living in the home with their daughter, Catherine. Thank God both escaped and when I arrived, were having coffee with their neighbor and our good parishioner, Mary Ann Moris. The house is completely destroyed. Dottie and Catherine have moved in with Dottie's eldest daughter, Sharon in Tannersville, Pennsylvania. In conversation with Sharon, it seems that it is best if her mother and sister remain in the Tannersville area where they can receive the necessary assistance they need in their day-to-day living. A GoFundMe page was set up by Deacon Ray for \$5,000 and as of Thursday morning, it has exceeded \$18,000, thanks to the generosity of many. Deacon Ray along with the Tobin family are currently reviewing their needs and will be in touch as to how we can help them further. At this point, please keep them in your prayers. If you would like to send good wishes, please contact the office and we will be happy to give you their address. A big thanks to the firefighters and first responders from Washington Township, Chester and Califon; and to our police and many first responders who were on scene so quickly. Thanks also to our good friend and Pastor Emeritus, Fr. Mike and Deacon Ray for their advice and support in this tragedy.

Additionally, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our beloved parishioners and many friends who join us virtually each day; your prayers, support and financial generosity during these difficult days has been invaluable. We are grateful to our parishioners who participate in online giving coupled with the weekly envelopes and our special friends of St. Luke from different places who have so graciously helped us to make our ends meet. Thank you.

Maureen and I have been in touch with our Confirmation and CCD families, as well as other parishioners who were very keen to share how the Lenten sacrifice for Catholic Charities went and how our many families learned about the plight of the working poor, prisoner support, drug rehab support and the education of seminarians. We would love to hear your reflections on your Lenten sacrifice and encourage you to send them to us. For any of you who have not yet sent in your Lenten sacrifice donation, please mail it in or place it in the black lock box to the left of the narthex doors. I know that our generosity this past Lenten season will help many who were previously struggling financially and are now in a much worse place and depending on our help and the help of other generous people like us.

My dear parishioners and virtual friends, this weekend's gospel reminds us how the eyes of the disciples were opened as they encountered the risen Christ. As you receive spiritual Holy Communion this weekend, recognize the same Christ coming into your soul to fill you with his love and strength.

*Fr. Owen*