Brothers and Sisters, it is a great joy for me to be with you today as we officially inaugurate the centenary celebration of the founding of St. Pius V parish. I would like to thank your pastor, Fr. Augustine Judd, for extending a gracious invitation to me to preside and preach on this special occasion. Along with all of us, it is a welcome opportunity for me to give thanks to God for calling my family to this “Holy Mountain” in 1953. For 60 years of the 100 we celebrate, my family experienced the loving care of the Good Shepherd here at St. Pius V Parish.

While today’s gospel has its challenges for this occasion, it also has a backdrop of profound beauty: the symbol of the wedding banquet. It speaks of God’s eternal desire to be united with us in a loving, intimate and life-giving union. The mysterious guest without the wedding garment (the garment is a symbol of being clothed in Christ at baptism) rejects the effusive, extravagant love of his host. Contrary to this rejection, our patron saint, Pius V, our location in the city of Providence and our spiritual legacy as a parish and school served by the Order of Preachers, has, for 100 years enabled the parishioners of St. Pius to joyfully accept the King’s invitation and gladly put on the Lord Jesus Christ in word and loving deed. Let’s look at each.

**Our Patron Saint**
As we enter our church, there is a striking mosaic of St. Pius V praying the rosary for victory of the Christian forces in the Battle of Lepanto, Oct. 7, 1571. As you undoubtedly recall from my 75th anniversary homily, I wonder if the fact that our parish was founded near the end of World War I was the reason that Pope St. Pius V was the Dominican saint chosen to be our patron.

His patronage conveyed the promise of victory and peace through fervent prayer. St. Pius had asked all of Christian Europe to pray the rosary. October 7th then became the feast of the Holy Rosary, the rosary that is beautifully proclaimed in our radiant stained glass window. What our patron saint teaches us then, is the central importance of turning to God in prayer to sustain us in all the struggles, challenges and mysteries of our lives. When we do so, we experience God fulfilling his promise in today’s first reading: “On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples... He will wipe away the tears of every face.” For one hundred years
our brothers and sisters have followed the example of St. Pius V and have experienced in this parish a peace the world cannot give.

The City Where We Serve
Parishes are located in every corner of God’s world and each setting provides its own set of gifts and challenges. (We continue to remember those whose parishes are still trying to recover from the natural disasters of recent weeks.) Ours, of course, is a city parish, which at this time makes these words of St. Paul from today’s second reading apt: “I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance.” St. Pius was a parish of abundance before I-95 changed the demographics of Rhode Island in the late 50s. The parish I lived in during my early years at St. Pius School had the people and resources to put twelve different kinds of Italian marble and life-sized mosaics depicting the stations of the cross in our beautiful church. After I-95 was built, suburban churches received many of those parishioners and resources. But here is an important silver lining in this demographic change. St. Paul puts it this way: “My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with the glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Notice, the invitees with the farm and business rejected the king’s invitation. At this time in our parish’s history we recognize more easily the truth of our radical dependence on the “glorious riches of Jesus Christ” and so we are eager to come in from the streets of our city so that God can gift us with the wedding garment of his Son. Isn’t that what Providence means?

The Order of Preachers
For one hundred years now, Dominican friars and sisters, members of the Order of Preachers, have responded to the call of the Good Shepard to care for the people of St. Pius Parish and school. In 1216, St Dominic, represented by this beautiful statue to my left, founded his Order to bring the light, clarity and challenge of God’s saving truth to the church of his time. All of us who wear his white habit strive to continue his mission today. But I would like to expand our usual understanding of what it means to be a preacher to include all of us, ordained, consecrated religious and laity alike, who call St. Pius our spiritual home. To broaden our call to preach, we can look to the servants in the gospel. They are the ones who make the connection between the gracious king and the potential guests. They speak the words of invitation, first rejected and then accepted. To be a Dominican parish, then, means to realize our call to serve our King by extending his invitation to all we meet. In 1988, a year before I was assigned to St. Pius, St. John Paul II wrote these words: “The lay faithful precisely because they are members of the church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the gospel” (Christifideles Laici, 33). These words do not refer to pulpit preaching, but to the reality that the laity who share in the charism of St. Dominic are called to be the bridge to Jesus’ marriage banquet for those who do not know him or who have grown indifferent. We need to have the courage to raise the faith question and extend the invitation trusting that we are sent by our loving God to all of his beloved children with deeds and words of love, compassion and concern.

Conclusion
By way of conclusion, then, my prayer is that the intercession and example of St Pius V, our mission field in the city of Providence and our shared legacy in the Order of Preachers will send us forth into this centenary year with the grace to make the words of St. Paul in today’s second reading our own: “I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.”
On Saturday, April 14, 2018, St. Pius V parish hosted the Called & Gifted Workshop. This workshop, developed by Sherry Weddell, helps participants discern their spiritual gifts which are given to each person for the good of their families, co-workers, the community and the church. Some 130 people participated, representing 19 Rhode Island parishes, the New England area, New York, New Jersey and even Ontario, Canada!

CALLED & GIFTED WORKSHOP

Called & Gifted Committee
Francesca Cuddeback, Joan Lamar, Margaret Cousineau, Jacki Huot, and Jenn Anzelone. Missing from this photo are Lauren Rieger and Katherine Culpepper.
LET US PRAY ... AND PLAY!

April 2018 was a very busy month! Many volunteers came together on the 21st to assemble the new playground. The playground was officially dedicated on May 9, 2018. Thank you to all who made this possible!

The New St. Pius V School Playground
BY THE NUMBERS

Number of different play activities = 21
Playground capacity = 28 children
Age design = 5-12 year olds
Number of project volunteers = 91
New playground fencing = 244 linear feet
Playground surface mulch = 67 cubic yards
Amount of project concrete used = 6.4 tons
Total project cost = $47,454
On Saturday, April 28, 2018, parishioners and friends of St. Pius V gathered at the Venus de Milo for a funfilled evening of memories and much laughter. The photo booth was well used and the memory table was a favorite gathering spot for renewing friendships.

Sr. Shirley shared the school’s history while Sr. Maria Francesca turned our focus to the future. Mary Garvey had us all laughing as she shared our parish history as only Mary can. John O’Rourke and Tyler Rowley also took part in telling our parish story. Fr. Patrick, our emcee, kept the evening moving along!

Music by Blurred Vision kept the dance floor full and active and our own Music Ministry member, Paula, joined in with the band for a few special songs! It was a wonderful night and a great way to celebrate our parish’s 100th Anniversary!
The 100th Anniversary Dinner Dance Committee
Angela Deller, Bob McMahon, Fr. Augustine Judd, Ann Lapolla, Sr. Shirley Jeffcott, Nichole Rowley (our fantastic chair!), Fr. Patrick Briscoe (who needs to stop being so serious), Jacki Huot and Pat Owen.
They hope everyone enjoyed themselves!
Lt. Francis M. Cusick
Saint Pius V Parishioner Killed in World War II

Francis M. Cusick was born in Providence on August 3, 1922, to St. Pius parishioners James and Ellen Cusick of 77 Wabun Avenue. He attended college in Indiana for two years before enlisting while in Indiana in February 29, 1943 joining his two older brothers, Joseph and James.

He enlisted in the Army Air Corps and proved so adept in radar interpretation that he quickly achieved the rank of Second Lieutenant and became a radar operator on a B-17G “Flying Fortress” bomber assigned to the 729th Bomber Squadron based in England.

In early January 1945, allied ground forces had successfully forced the German army to retreat from the Battle of the Bulge to safer ground in Germany. Allied commanders decided that continued bombing of German supply routes and industrial targets behind the German retreat was still crucial.

The industrial city of Bitburg, Germany, just over the border from Luxembourg, was targeted for bombing by the 729th Bomber Squadron on the night of January 2, 1945. On that night Lt. Cusick and his B-17 took a direct hit from German ground fire. The plane went into a tailspin and broke apart before it crashed. Lt. Cusick and seven other crew members were killed in the crash. The Germans took one surviving crew member prisoner.

Lt. Cusick was 23 years old, the youngest son in the Cusick family, when he died for his country. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart, and the Air Corps Air Medal posthumously. He was buried in the American War Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. He is one of six St. Pius parishioners who died in World War II.

The original World War II Honor Roll was a product of lean times. Each name was printed on small tin plates and all 340 names were then arranged on a door in the order that the parishioners enlisted and hung in our parish school for many years. After all these years the names were hard to read and the wood was not holding up well.

The Centennial Committee decided to recreate the World War II Memorial as a more fitting tribute to those who so valiantly served God and Country.

Other war memorials and plaques were also renewed or created so that all who serve will be remembered.
Luke “Ray” Green: 72 years in St. Pius Parish and World War II Hero

Luke “Ray” Green, born in 1920, grew up on Woonasquatucket Avenue in Centredale. Like many kids at the time, he went to work right out of grammar school in the mills, the Esmond Blanket Company in Ray’s case. As the war in Europe began to heat up, Ray joined the RI National Guard in 1940 and began active service in the US Army on February 24, 1941.

Basic training took place in a variety of places—New York, Florida, and California. Eventually, Ray was assigned to the 43rd Signal Company, part of the 43rd Infantry Division. The 43rd Signal Company was made up soldiers primarily from New England.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on December 7, 1941, and the subsequent declaration of war by President Roosevelt transformed Ray Green’s military experience. The 43rd Signal Company was shipped off to the South Pacific in October 1942 to begin a long slog by the US Army and Navy to capture Japanese controlled islands to eventually try and reach Japan. Guadalcanal, the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, Luzon Island in the Philippines—those places are familiar to anyone who has read about our World War II fighting in the South Pacific. Private and later Sergeant Ray Green was in all of those places and participated in combat for three and a half years, never once even going on leave.

As a member of the 43rd Signal Company, he was part of a group that ensured reliable communications for the Command units that coordinated both Army and Navy forces in battles. Ray had to keep radios working, sometimes alone for weeks away from his unit, and to climb up mountains and through swamps to lay phone lines, often during battles while avoiding Japanese snipers and shelling from distant artillery units. Malaria, snakes, sleeping in foxholes filled with water were all hazards of the job. Ray was so reliable that when the 43rd reached the Philippines, he was assigned to work by himself in the jungle with Philippine guerrilla units against the Japanese. Among his many Army medals, Ray was awarded a Bronze Star for his service in the Philippines.

Ray felt blessed when he was safely back in the US in the summer of 1945 just as the war ended. He met his future wife Helen in a downtown Providence furniture store, and she convinced him that he would have to convert to Catholicism if he wanted to marry her. Ray says with a straight face that when they went “parking,” she brought along a catechism to prepare him for his conversion. They married in 1946 and moved to Zella Street where he still lives, now on his own since Helen died in 2015. She also convinced him to get his high school diploma, which he earned at nights from Central High School.

Ray owned and ran Green’s Auto Upholstery shop in Warren for 40 years before retiring. Two children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and the New England Patriots continue to bring happiness to Ray, now approaching 98 years young.

Lt. John Clark, MD grew up in the St. Pius V parish and his family lived at the corner of Smith and Roslyn. He survived the Normandy landing during World War II and was decorated by the French government for his care of US and French soldiers.

Joseph Bernard Carty served in both World War II and the Korean Conflict in the military police and Provost Marshall Court. 3/2/1942 - 6/18/1951
The Centennial Celebration!

Sunday, October 28, 2018, began with a small ceremony at the corner of Eaton Street and the new honorary St. Pius V Way. Representative, and parishioner, Joanne Ryan unveiled the new street sign.

The parish gathered for the 10 am Mass with Bishop Thomas Tobin as Principal Celebrant. Past parishioners returned to celebrate and reminisce. Fr. Aedan McKeon, our oldest living former pastor, was warmly welcomed back. Fr. McKeon was the pastor from 1965-1971. The Provincial Prior of the Dominican Province of St. Joseph, Fr. Ken Letoile, who also happens to be a past pastor and a member of the class of ’61, returned to concelebrate. Fr. Augustine Judd, pastor, and Fr. Patrick Mary Briscoe, assistant pastor, were also joined by priests from Providence College. The Adult Choir included past members and former members of the bell choir reunited as the Alumni Bell Choir.

Following Mass, the assembly moved to the church hall to share memories, food, and laughter. An assortment of memorabilia as well as a slideshow helped to spark memories. Perhaps mention should be made that the evening finished with the Red Sox winning the World Series...just as they had in 1918!

May St. Pius V Parish continue to be a light in our neighborhood for many years to come!
Recalling 100 Years of St. Pius history...

Veronica Kenny Farrell was born in March 1917. Her family was one of the original dozen or so families of St. Pius V when the church opened in Harkins Hall in October 1918. As a parishioner, Veronica's sacramental experiences are unique:

- She received her First Communion in Harkins Hall in 1924.
- Her Confirmation was in the Church School building.
- She married Howard Farrell in the "new church" in October 1963.

Her parents were Grace Malone and Florance Joseph Kenny. Of her four brothers, two became Dominican Friars: Fr. Bernard Kenny, O.P. and Fr. John Kenny, O.P. Both taught at Providence College. Fr. Bernard Kenny formed the first Boy Scout Troop at St. Pius in 1923. She still has family members who are parishioners at St. Pius V.

Veronica, at age 101, has many memories of the original parish families. Veronica remembers walking up to choir practice as a child ready to listen to Miss Margaret Brothers, the organist, who was a tough choir leader! She remembered the Meleedys, the Lynchs, and the Donnellys, especially her friend Dorothy Donnelly. She recalled that Mr. Russell, who lived at the corner of Elmhurst and Eaton, was especially active in the new parish. He loved the church, she said, and he worked there in the parish. She told a story about the parish wanting to buy the house at the corner of Elmhurst and Fairoaks. Mr. O’Brien, an Irishman who hated Catholics, owned this house, so they knew he wouldn’t sell to the parish. Mr. Russell bought the house and then sold it to St. Pius. This is now the convent.

Veronica graduated from RISD. An accomplished painter, she recently had a show at the Providence Art Club. A photo of one of her beautiful watercolors is to the right.

Looking to the Future...