

FROM “BLIGHT” TO NEW LIFE!

Over the past three years, many parishioners have discovered our parish courtyard/garden. Nestled between the back of the gathering space and our Parish Center, it provides a quiet place to pray, take family photos after Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, weddings, not to mention a convenient cut through to church, from parts of the parking lot. It is where we gather to light the “new fire” for the Easter Vigil, and celebrate an outdoor mass before our parish picnic.

This past fall, it's most frequent visitor was Msgr. Turro. Accompanied by a caregiver, or Kathy McCabe, Msgr. was able to walk to and from the courtyard, enjoy the beautiful plants and solitude, only happily interrupted on “Tuesday” afternoons, where he met with the 2nd graders from OLMA, who joined him in saying the Rosary.

It was late fall when we sadly discovered, the 3 trees originally planted to provide shade, were infected with a blight. In spite of the best efforts of parishioner, Bill Koenig, a landscape architect and designer of the courtyard, and Pete Jacobson whose landscape company installed the courtyard/garden, the trees did not survive the winter.

Over the last few weeks of Lent, a plan to replace the trees came together. Through the generosity of Bill and Marlene Koenig, Pete Jacobsen and his landscape company, and recent gifts to the OLM Courtyard/ garden fund, from Marianne Coche in memory of her husband, Walter, and Peter and Kathy Bowen in honor of their grandson Jared, the **trees have been replaced**. We also wish to acknowledge the original donors of the trees, the Jordan and Ballanco families, the Lange family, and an anonymous donor who planted a tree to honor Msgr. Turro for 65 plus years of priestly care to our parish.

In the midst of the darkness Covid -19 has cast over the entire earth, signs of new life and the promised hope of Resurrection are manifesting themselves too, even in our courtyard/garden!

We hope that when we are able to come together again as a faith community, we will be able to share with a renewed sense the intention of our courtyard/garden; **a place to gather, pray and reflect** on the collective experiences these painful and difficult times have brought to so many in varied ways. As people of faith, we are mindful that the agony and despair experienced by our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, is transformed for all eternity in another gardens' empty tomb, Easter morning. *“Jesus' hope is different. He plants in our hearts, the conviction that God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave He brings life”.* (Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2020)

While we wait, take inspiration in the words of Pope Francis, *“As stewards of God's creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family.”*

