

FROM FATHER DAVE

There is a story of an elderly woman who had no family. She was nearing the sunset of her life and so she wanted to plan her funeral arrangements. Because she trusted in her pastor, she met with him to assist her in this matter. After going through all the details she said, "Father, please make sure that during the visitation there is a fork in my hand."

The pastor became perplexed and commented, "A fork? Why do you want to be holding a fork?" It seemed so strange to the pastor.

The woman replied, "Father, after all of those church pot luck dinners they always told us to hold onto our fork for the dessert because the best was yet to be." The woman not only loved her sweets but she also was a woman of faith and deeply trusted in the words of St. Paul who said, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, what God has ready for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

My dear parishioners on July 1, 2020 we crossed the threshold into a new beginning with the establishment of Saint Aidan Parish. With all due respects to our roots and the paths we took to arrive at this point, I believe wholeheartedly that we are now one body in Jesus Christ under the patronage of Saint Aidan. Together it is incumbent upon us through our Christian baptism to center our lives in Jesus and grow every day in our relationship with him, for he is "the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:16)

As we embrace this new beginning I truly believe that for all of us "the best is yet to be." I realize that the last few years have been a challenging time for us Catholics. It has also been so hard to be a priest. Together we have suffered through the Grand Jury Report and the painful aftermath of Clergy Sexual Abuse, the rigors of On Mission for the Church Alive demanding change of all of us, and a pandemic that is ongoing.

In spite of it all, I believe the best is yet to be for all of us. This new beginning affords us all the opportunity to look with new eyes. Beginnings are also a time to dream and hope. While our earthly existence is not "heavenly," I believe that we have a "future full of hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) There are so many possibilities before us. I want to emphasize the word "us." We are all in this together and we all have gifts to be used in service to the Church and this new community.

As your new shepherd, I invite you to join me in this walk of hope into a whole new future. There is room for everyone and we do not want to leave anyone behind. Moreover, none of us can be spectators. We are all called to be living, active participants in the faith in good and bad times. Where is God calling you to serve in this community?

There is a story in Luke's gospel of Jesus speaking to the disciples. After a long night of not catching any fish, Jesus directs them to "Pull out into the deep..." (Luke 5:4-6) Simon initially resists this command but then lowers the nets and, lo and behold, the disciples catch so many fish that their nets begin to tear.

When we root our lives in Jesus and commit ourselves entirely to him great things can happen. The best is yet to be! My dream is that together we can build one strong vibrant parish with effective ministries for years to come. Of course, this all begins at the altar of God and Holy Mass. To that end, we will begin daily Mass Monday through Friday this week at 8:00am. Weekend Masses will be Saturday at 4:00pm and Sunday at 8:00am and 10:00am outdoors in the parking lot of the Saint Alexis Campus rain or shine. We are having Mass outdoors because there are no limitations to participants as long as we wear masks and practice social distancing. If we were to have Mass indoors we would be limited to 25% capacity. We do not want to have to turn anyone away from the Holy Eucharist. We are in need of parking lot porters to assist with traffic. If interested, please call the parish office.

Please know that Mass indoors is problematic right now because of the cleaning and sanitizing that must take place. Not only is our staff limited but damage can be done to the surfaces through cleaning. In my previous assignment, the varnish has literally come off of the pews because of all the cleaning. We also were unable to use one of the churches because of the carpeting and lack of ventilation.

The safety of our faithful is of paramount importance to me. This is not a normal time. I ask for your patience and trust. Please know that the decisions I make as pastor will be always rooted in prayer and collaboration with the mind of Holy Mother Church, the unity of the congregation and the safety of all. Hold on to your fork. The best is yet to be!

Have a blessed week!

