

A NOTE FROM FATHER BOB
March 25, 2020

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when Mary said “**yes**” to the angel Gabriel and through her “**fiat**” and the **WORD BECAME FLESH!** Nine months from now the Church will celebrate the miracle of the birth of the Son of God on Christmas Day!

Today is very special to me spiritually because of Mary’s FIAT I try to embrace the FIAT in my priestly life. On October 10, 1995, through the FIAT, I was appointed your pastor. What a grace it is to be your pastor especially at this unique moment in the history of the Church, our nation and the entire world, and through the **gift of our faith** we will get through these dark days.

Today is also special to me and the Religious Teachers Filippini because it was on this day, March 25th, that Saint Lucy Filippini went home to the “house of the Father” as the twelve noon Angelus bell rang after a battle with cancer. The Angelus bell, which normally rings three times a day (6am – 12noon – 6pm) reminds us of the Annunciation and Mary’s YES – her FIAT! At 12noon today I will gather with the Sisters and Deacon Tom Lanza to celebrate Holy Mass and remember Mary’s FIAT and Saint Lucy Filippini’s FIAT! At this moment in history let us not be afraid to embrace our own FIATS that come our way and look to the faith of Mary who never gave up when things became difficult and even painful in her life knowing that God was with her!

I always say that God speaks to us in the normal events of our lives so I’m asking the Lord “what do You want us to learn during these days?” At the beginning of Lent and the first couple Sundays of Lent I shared the line from the Gospel of Ash Wednesday, “*Go to your inner room and close the door and pray to your Father in secret and your Father who sees in secret will repay you!*” Well the Lord is truly inviting us during this “shelter in place” to go to our “inner room” and pray! Know that you are not alone that I am lifting each and every one of you in my prayers, especially when I celebrate Holy Mass in my private Chapel or with the Sisters at the Convent. Also know that the daily intentions and Sunday Mass intentions are being offered by me.

The South Brunswick Police Department is aware that our Church is open for private prayer Monday through Friday, 9am to 4pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 6pm. It is moving to see the faithful come to Church for private prayer and our Church allows enough space for “social distancing” which is the word of the day! The Police also are aware that the parish office is open Monday through Thursday from 9am to 12noon if any parishioners should need assistance.

On March 16th I wrote to the Saint Augustine school community and on the 17th, I wrote to all of the parishioners of Saint Augustine inviting everyone to continue to support the parish. Once again the parishioners have come through and this past weekend, March 22nd, with parishioners dropping off their envelopes in the Church, through the parish center and mail, I was able to deposit over \$18,000 to help with the payroll and parish bills. I have cut back on some parish expenses at this time, i.e placing mulch around the parish grounds and spring flower planting, and God willing this will happen soon...but we are trying to be cautious about finances at this time. I have informed the parish accountant that for the next two months I would not be receiving my stipend check as the pastor to use this savings to help with parish bills. I am so grateful for the outpouring of support during these days of uncertainty and your continued future support. Let us continue to pray for one another.

Let us take comfort in our Church’s sign on Henderson Road which reads:

**JESUS SAID
BE NOT AFRAID**

WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS!

KEEP THE FAITH

I remain,

In the Peace of Christ,
Father Bob