

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Before I get into the main topic for this bulletin, I would like to make an important announcement. We have decided on a date for a parish-wide meeting to discuss the buildings and financial situation of the parish. We will have two meetings, one in the morning, one in the evening, on Thursday, February 18th. The morning meeting will begin at 10am, and the evening meeting at 7pm. The meetings will take place in Nolan Hall and registration will be required. There will be a presentation, a time for questions, and a time for reflection (similar to the meetings that took place in June 2019). In preparation for the meetings, please do review all the materials that I have shared on the website regarding the status of the parish. I will also be adding some additional information in the days leading up to the meetings. Finally, if you do think of a question ahead of the meetings, please send an e-mail to [facilities@stjbabylon.org](mailto:facilities@stjbabylon.org). While there will be a chance to ask questions at the meetings, we can do any necessary research beforehand if we know what some of the questions will be. I cannot stress enough how important these meetings will be, and so I hope that as many parishioners as possible will be able to attend. Note: since Nolan Hall is not normally set up for streaming, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to stream the meetings.

We move on to something very special. I hope that you have all found inspiration through the witness given by different families in our parish as we showcase their works of faith, hope, and charity during the pandemic. I would like to share with you a story that came across my desk that I thought fit right in with our series. As a pastor, we receive various mailings from different religious congregations. I received one from a congregation that has its motherhouse here in New York: The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne. You can learn more about them from their own website: <https://hawthorne-dominicans.org>

Along with the special charisms these sisters have by virtue of being Dominicans, they also take on the special apostolate of running nursing care homes for those with incurable cancer. Please do take the time to read about them: they are extraordinary women doing extraordinary things. The article I would like to present to you comes from a publication that was in a packet of information that they sent me. With their permission, I present it to you. Also note that this publication was sent along with vocations materials. Please pray for the sisters to experience new vocations, pray for young women to remain open to the call from God to heroically devote their lives to Him in religious life. Perhaps you can share this with a young lady you know that has shown signs of possessing the virtue needed to be a sister. Perhaps you have thought about this yourself; maybe now is the time for you to share those thoughts with a sister, brother, or priest. I am deeply grateful for the sisters letting me share this with you through our bulletin.

~ fr. Jason

### **To See What God is Doing**

Much has been written and discussed about all the bad things that have happened in 2020; the memes, the jokes, the podcasts, discussions are immense. Instead of entering the fray of all that has happened, and there is much too much to enter into with any serious discourse in our small publication, we are going to try to dwell on any good that God has brought in this past year for our community.

As we had to begin to curtail volunteers and visitors in our homes, though we missed them, our homes became less busy. We had more time for prayer and more time to do simple things with our patients, like putting a puzzle together or playing a game. We became more than usual, a member of their family, since COVID restrictions greatly curtailed one on one interaction with their family members. Since we live with our patients, we always know them well, but we got to know them in a different way this year.

We became, not just their Sister who is their nurse, but a Sister in the midst of a peculiar circumstance with them. In our accompaniment with them in their illness, we can sympathize and give advice and pray for them, but we cannot experience what they experience. Now we could accompany them in the troubles of our times, as we were experiencing the same event that they were, the same restrictions upon freedoms, the same revolutionary changes to our world.



The Sisters were able to spend a little more time with each other as well, for example, going to the park with another Sister, or fishing, or outdoor projects on our grounds, or simply sitting and talking together. In not being able to be with our families, we were able to appreciate the love we have for our relatives and more earnestly cherish good memories, and at the same time grow in love of our Sisters.

Most of all, I believe 2020 has sharpened our desire for the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. How much of our faith do we often take for granted?! When such things as the Eucharist and confession were difficult or impossible to obtain for a period of time, our knowledge of how dependent we are upon them loomed large. And, as we see overseas Churches closed and priests even arrested for administering the sacraments, it makes one cleave to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament all the more. Our Lord warned there would be a time He would be taken from us, which quickly in the Scriptures is realized in the Crucifixion, but how those words resonated for so many who saw Him taken from their daily lives. Then comes the question, does the removal of the Sacraments affect us? If so, we begin to see more deeply their value. To the modernists in the world, the Sacraments are not essential at best, and even scoffed at. If we do miss it, there is an opportunity to understand more deeply that which we love. The saints know this. St. Padre Pio said that the world could better survive without the sun than the Eucharist.



Related to this, in receiving our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the heavenly food, we are reminded that our home is not here. It is a beautiful world God created, but it is not our final destination. The events of 2020 created a restlessness and longing in many people. Some long simply for things to 'go back to normal.' But this longing is really rooted in a kind of holy nostalgia in each of us for the end for which we were made: God. The events of 2020, whatever one thinks of the veracity of all the events and discussions, brought to our minds our mortality. The modernists either ignore mortality or decide they will save themselves; we long for our Savior. But when, Lord will you come? St. Ephrem says that one of the reasons Christ did not give the Apostles knowledge of the exact time of His return was that each age would look for Him. "He kept those things hidden so that we may keep watch, each of us thinking that He will come in our own day. If He had revealed the time of his coming, his coming would have lost its savor: it would no longer be an object of yearning for the nations and the age in which it would be revealed." So, we wait and keep watch, and remember, as St. Therese said, "The world's thy ship, not thy home."

The events of 2020, if we have eyes of Faith, can help us to see again what is truly important.



For 2020 the year, is also an analogy for vision. Can we see what is really going on? Can we see what is true, despite what any media or public figure tries to present as true? Christ is Truth, and if we stay rooted to Him, we will be able to see. The saints are so interesting because they see what others do not, they love without measure, and they can seem almost reckless because they place things of God before all other things. We were born into these times, not by accident, but for a purpose. Like the Saints, God's plan in these times for each of us is particular.

In all these things, please know the Sisters have been, and are praying for all of you: our country, our world, the Church. We pray not only for an end to all the troubles that have come upon us in 2020, but primarily, we pray, as in 1 Thessalonians: "...May the God of peace Himself sanctify you in all things; that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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*"In His Love"*