

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There is a wonderful prayer book that was printed until 1950 called the *Raccolta* (Italian for "collection"). In this prayer book you could find a great variety of prayers, litanies, novenas, and other acts of piety from the Catholic tradition. Nothing in particular connected the prayers, they were, as the name means, simply a collection. This bulletin update is a *raccolta* of sorts. I would like to bring together some thoughts that have no particularly strong connection to one another other than that they all pertain to our parish.

First is a type of update, acknowledging that while the Coronavirus vaccine has begun to be administered here in NY, it looks like we will be under the different social distancing restrictions for many more months. The diocese has begun instructing parishes once again in regards to conducting certain activities under these restrictions. For example, confirmations will continue to be done by the priests in the parish this year, and not by a bishop. Other guidelines have to do with Lent (more on that next week). We can be sure that some guide will be produced to lead us through Holy Week. I ask that parishioners continue to exercise patience and charity as we work through these circumstances. As was the case for 2020, we may implement some things on a provisional basis in order to see if they aid us through these times. Let us especially keep in prayer all of those who are most impacted by these liturgical changes: children making first holy communion and confirmation, couples getting married, families looking to bury their deceased.

Second, I want to give a preview of some of the things we can look forward to in 2021. We have already spoken about the opportunity to have your house blessed with the special water that was blessed on the Epiphany Vigil. Registrations for scheduling those blessings should be made public soon. We have also begun planning for Lent. There will be much to share soon, once all scheduling details have been confirmed. We also plan to see a return of some of the courses that we were offering up until the end of the Fall. Do look forward to participating in those. Conversations have begun in regards to celebrating the year of St. Joseph. There have also been some initial plans to create a parish "sanctoral cycle" by which we look to celebrate a number of saints throughout the year. I cannot guarantee if we will be able to act on all of those this year, but we are hopeful to be able to celebrate some. Also, within the next month, we will be announcing a date and time for a parish-wide meeting regarding finances and parish property. I do hope that many of you can attend as we will discuss some very crucial questions regarding the parish. Please review the buildings update that I gave in September, and the financial update I gave earlier this month.

Finally, I just found out today (Thursday) that the parish truck, which is essential for our parish maintenance including snow removal, is in irreparable shape. The frame, which has been rusty for a long time, has developed a large crack. It is my hope that someone in the parish community may have the means to help us obtain a truck so that we are not left without the ability to plow during the next snowfall. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any substantial leads (fr.jason@stjbbabylon.org).

May God continue to bless and guide you and your families throughout this year!

In Christ,

fr. Jason