

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – DECEMBER 13, 2020

Dear Parishioners and Parents,

Today, the mid Sunday of Advent, is called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for ‘Let us rejoice.’ It was 8 years ago today that the parish announced the Gaudete Campaign. So many positive things around our parish have happened.

Today, however, we find ourselves isolated, constricted, concerned, sick, and even confused with unexpected deaths. How can we rejoice?

One aspect of our discouragement and fragile mood is our over focusing just on today. The media never lets up on today. We are deluged with depressing current events.

Pope Francis Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* speaks of our obsession with the moment. He encourages us to remember the past, especially the good things of the past. This will raise our spirit. We still have our lives, our homes, food, our Church, and this positive list grows. These thoughts are uplifting.

In this Sunday of rejoicing we should also imagine a brighter future. We have several vaccines on the horizon. We have Bishop elect David Bonnar ready to take over the Diocese on January 12th. The United States will have new leadership, a President elect and cabinet. Hopefully the President will bring his wisdom of years working across the aisles. There is so much for which we can be hopeful.

A number of our Students are preparing for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, The Conferring of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This Holy Spirit can teach us all things and assist us in discernment. The gifts of discernment and wisdom are so necessary in this time of accelerated change. Decisions need to be made. We pray that the gifts of wisdom and discernment may rest upon our Governor and all those who have leadership roles over us.

This Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, should lift up our spirits. The Lord has not abandoned us but rather is in the boat with us even in the storm. May each one of us bring this spirit of hope based on the good memories of the past and an optimism for the future. Prayerfully we pronounce the antiphon: “Rejoice in the Lord, again I say to you, Rejoice.”

St. Joseph School and Our Children

Principal Ike Holzapfel and I are extremely pleased with St. Joseph School. So are the faculty. The faculty has expressed to the principal, and some to me, that they are most happy we are continuing school while others close down and go remotely. One of the Portage County health nurses spoke to me personally that she was pleased we were keeping our school open.

We continue to put into place modes of operation that reduce health risk. One of the risks of the children is being separated from one another. They grow best together and not in isolation. My thank you to the parents for believing in St. Joseph School and how we are managing change in these evolving times.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
December 13, 2020