

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

## Dear Families and Parishioners,

These are troubling times that probe and test us. This is a new world war that operates with the stealth of a modern bomber and with a sting more painful than a bee. No person escapes this overall assault of the invisible enemy. The COVID 19 shadows over families, schools, and church.

Families have been in isolation for months. Children of all ages are not sure about their schooling, friends are separated, grandparents are marooned from grandchildren, the elderly and loved ones are confined without visitors, and people are masked like bandits.

School for all student ages is looked at warily, teachers keep their distance and socialization is limited. Voices are muffled, music and singing stifled, and teaching whether at home or at school far more difficult.

Our churches are half-full, and the Eucharist is available but often lies in waiting. Public worship with friends is more careful and concerned; and opportunities for sharing are less often. Moods are muted and muffled, patience thin, and temporal futures less certain.

My friends, how do we cope and not droop? How to regain the zest of life? How do we avoid a paralysis of spirit? Don't let the devil and evil spirits drive you down. Rather, count your blessings, reflect upon the good times of the past, and dream the joy of the Gospel.

God can penetrate our Spirit because God knows of what we are made. We are fashioned in his image and likeness. Many selfless and intelligent people are at work to lift us up. The immediacy and depressing stories of the social media are not our solution. Rather, PATIENT PRAYER!

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, lived in troubled times especially through Jesus public life. Jesus was loved by the people but seriously disliked by most of the leaders. Mary, who pondered things in her heart, could likely see the gathering and indeed the actual storm. She remained constant, and understood that God could not die but would live with the joy of the Resurrection. She stabilized the apostles as they awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Our Grotto, dedicated to Mary, and the signs we have been given already in the Grotto, buoy us up. Amid all the troubles, do not let yourself become a messenger of doom but rather a prophet of joy.

I encourage you to begin again coming to the Sacrament of the Eucharist once a week. The children need this and you as parents and grandparents need the Lord also. If you do not begin to attend the Mass on weekends or even possibly during the week when the crowds are small, neither can the children attend. Nothing we do in the school can have the effect of what you do at home and at church with children. We will have children's Mass outdoors.

My prayer for all the families of the parish is that the Holy Spirit will guide you, shift your fear, increase your confidence, and finally, raise you up. (Prayer for Anointing of the Ill).

I am deeply impressed by Pope Francis. Amidst all the problems that must fall at his feet and assault his person from all over the world, he maintains a joyousness of spirit that is reflected in his face. May we take heart because the same God that moves him is our father.