

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – APRIL 11, 2021

## Dear Parishioners and Families,

April finds us in the season of planting and growth. Even as we plant and cultivate, our ultimate vision is on the harvest, “By their fruits we shall know them.” Mt 7: 16.

On Good Friday a hardy group of parishioners planted 80 conifer trees on Calvary Hill in our cemetery. As many of the trees on Calvary Hill became old and died, it was time to plant and seek new growth. Planting and growing is gradual, but God gives the increase. 1 Cor. 3:6

Growth is unpredictable. Pope Francis points out how unruly growth is, “God’s words are unpredictable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sewn, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps. Mk 4: 26 – 29. The Church has to accept the unruly freedom of the Word of God. Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, #22.

In spiritual endeavors there appears to be one important sign that God is with us. In the Acts of the Apostles in the early Church it is frequently noted that the total number of believers was growing. “That very day about 3,000 were added to their number.” Acts 2: 41.

Families and farming have so many factors in common. One never knows what the next day will bring. Will we have rain, clouds, or sunshine? That is your life and that is my life. We change plans, find new tools, adjust programs toward the desired result: growth and harvest.

Unfortunately, there are “no uniform recipes, because each country or region, or family has its own problems and limitations.” Pope Francis *Laudato Si* # 180. We need to stay united within the great diversity God has created. “We seek to find in the treasury of the Church whatever is most fruitful for the ‘today’ of salvation. Pope Francis, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, #173.

God has certainly blessed our Church, our school, and our Grotto. Like the farmer’s seed that is planted each spring, the seeds of the parish have sprouted and we beg God’s continued favor. The Gospels were often related to growth, even of the smallest mustard seed. The Lord has resurrected us.

If we consider the immense variety of concrete situations..., it is understandable the neither the Synod or the Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules... and applicable in all cases. What is possible is simply a renewed encouragement to undertake responsible personal and pastoral discernment of particular cases.” Pope Francis, the *Joy of Love*, #300.

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed. ...The message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing, and at the same time most necessary.” Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, #35.

In all things in life whether it be Church, or family, or education, the eye is always on God’s harvest.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.  
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