

Angelus Letter

12 May 2020

Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Easter

Sts. Nereus and Achilleus

St. Pancras

Dear Parish Family,

I was talking with a parishioner yesterday who said that he suspects that people are reporting that they are doing better than perhaps they are. That is, that there is so much with which to cope that perhaps many are distracted from their mental and spiritual well-being in lieu of taking care of themselves.

On the one hand, it is telling of the character of this parish that you understand that everybody is being challenged in some way and so we have a “stiff upper lip” attitude to help build each other up and see us through. How would it help walking around telling everybody how miserable it is to be alive? And so I want to thank you for being the kind of community that sees an unavoidable challenge, grits your collective teeth, sets your brows and marches into the fray with a “let’s get it done” attitude. For this I am very grateful. It makes things on my end so much easier.

On the other hand, it is not lost on me that there are some cracks in the facade. The challenges of amplified home life, job and income concerns, social distancing and missing of important events, loss of coping mechanisms, upset schedules, too much or too little to do, health concerns and more can only be sustained so long without some rough spots beginning to show through. Of particular note are those who so desperately long for the Eucharist and the parish community. Fr. Simone and I have both remarked at what joy that it gives us that so many people place such a high importance on the Eucharist in their loves and understand how essential it is to life. It will be a blessing to be coming out of this time of fasting from the Eucharist for so many. But it is also sad knowing that we are *capable* of celebrating now (we have priests, a building, bread and wine, and people) but that we *can’t* at the moment.

Fr. Simone and I have found it trying as well. We chose a life of service to the Church (you) through the sacraments and the building up of a community in Christ. Instead of standing with you and trying to stir your hearts, we speak to a one-eyed, expressionless and mute camera. I suppose this time has been a reconfirmation that I was not meant to be a monk nor a hermit but a parish priest, and I look forward to seeing your faces again very soon - well - at least your eyes over your masks!

I don’t want to overstate this however. We are fine. In fact, we talk about how lucky we are during this pandemic compared to so many of whom we know. And you have been so kind about sending in notes of support and understanding. Thank you so much.

When you have time today, please say a prayer for those who are really having difficulties and for the parish in general. Even if it is just a Hail Mary and a “St. Sebastian, pray for us!” Have Faith! The worst of the storm is about it pass. Pentecost is around the corner and so close we can see it coming. Start preparing your hearts to receive Him once again!

**TIME TO PRAY**

Tonight, there will be a live-streamed Holy Hour from St. Sebastian Parish which you will be able to access from our parish’s YouTube channel, <https://m.youtube.com/channel/UC0FM4PBnZG--2iVayQrFQ9w>. It will begin at 7PM with exposition and a short Word ceremony. Then, at 7:45PM, there will be compline (night prayer) and benediction (to bless all those living in our parish).

There are a number of places online in which you can find compline for Tuesday in the Easter Season. One is iBreviary, <https://www.ibreviary.org/en/>. It is a free app that will allow you to pray all the Liturgy of Hours, the official prayer of the Catholic Church.

**EVIDENCE OF LIFE**

Despite so many things being cancelled, much of life still goes on. Two couples visited us yesterday (with proper social distancing and all that.) The first came to tell us that they are recently engaged (yes! during the pandemic) and wanted a date reserved on our books for their wedding. Another couple stopped by to sadly say that they are moving away for educational and job opportunities though they hope to return some day. Their house sold quickly and they took a break from packing to stop by.

The houses in our neighborhood are once again selling very quickly. It seems like “For Sale” signs go up simultaneously with their “SOLD!” sign on them.

The rectory will be a little livelier. Because of the virus, many summer opportunities for seminarians have been cancelled. Ian Kelly who was supposed to work at a Catholic summer camp will remain with us. Soon I will be introducing you to Cameron Ferrel who was supposed to be traveling this summer with a “Catholic Work Camps” but who will be staying and working with us this summer. An additional seminarian studying here from Vietnam may also be staying with us. We are waiting to see if that comes through.

In other signs of life (besides the prediction that it may be possible for the NFL to play in the fall), an email came in from the diocese that states in part:

*Now for some good news, finally!! I am happy to announce the rescheduled 2020 ordination dates as follows:*

***1 August 2020 – Priesthood Ordination*** *at 10:00 am at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist – Bishop Roger Gries will preside*

***29 August 2020 – Permanent Deacon Ordination*** *at 10:00 am at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist – Bishop Martin Amos will preside.*

*The transitional diaconate ordination will take place at the seminary chapel on a date yet to be determined.*

*Please keep in mind that we will adhere to whatever current directives are in place by health and government officials relative to public gatherings and social distancing. This may limit the number able to attend the ordination. Further information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the ordination dates.*

**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK**

Two parishioners will not be seen when we return to Mass. Theodore Richardson and Francis Sawaya passed away. Please say a prayer for them. Eternal rest grant onto them O Lord.

Added to our sick list is Don Matis. Please keep him and all of our sick and distressed in your prayers:

Katy Carris, Debbie Cherif, Saida Cherif, Elizabeth Clark, Rita Cummings, Anthony D’Attoma, Gretchen & Steve Golnar, Stan Kennedy, Mary Kay McCarron, Jill Morganwick, Kathleen O’Hearn, Pamela Oliver, Sue Prexta, Frank and Nancy Ropchock, John Schultz, Bernard and Patricia Smith, Don Snyder, Marilyn Spallino, Ron Tedeschi, & Marie White.

God bless you,

Fr. Valencheck.

St. Sebastian, pray for us.

Holy Mother, pray for us.