

January 13, 2021

Greetings:

With the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, the Christmas season is officially over. The beginning of ordinary time is upon us. For the next six weeks, we work our way to Lent. February 17<sup>th</sup> is Ash Wednesday.

This Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, will be exactly ten months since the beginning of the pandemic and all the shutdown restrictions due to Covid 19. Amazing.

For the last ten months, our faith communities have fared well. We reopened at 25% of our seating capacity on the weekend of June 13-14, 2020. I have to say we have been determined to keep the parish operating and celebrating the sacraments, however limited it has been. At St. Maria Goretti we are averaging around 60-70 people a weekend, at Mary Our Lady of Peace (MOLOP), about 100 per weekend. We have room for more!

Back in July, we celebrated the Easter Sacraments and First Holy Communion. In August, we celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation at Mary Our Lady of Peace. The fall has gone well as we have added lectors and music to our liturgies, respectively.

In September, school got underway with religious education primarily online. At MOLOP, the grades preparing for their sacraments experienced limited gatherings. With all the restrictions, MOLOP's annual GALA and auction was moved to November with an online auction only and was successful. During Advent too, good things happened as the MOLOP Youth Group's live drive-through Nativity was well attended and enhanced the Advent season and preparation for Christmas.

The fact remains we have all hung together and stayed steadfast in our faith, participating the best we can. The various parish committees continue to meet via Zoom and the work of the parishes goes on.

A big thanks to all who support the parish with their time, talent and treasures. It takes all of us to meet all our obligations. In our Gospel from St. John this Sunday, it is a call of the first apostles. Pay attention and take note of the team building. John the Baptist is standing in a group of three. Jesus strolls by. Two follow and they become a band of three. Andrew scoots and gets his brother Peter and with Jesus, they become three again. A dance of three, a gentle and quiet camaraderie of coming and going – one points out, two follow, another points out, his brother joins in. We are a team.

In closing, we are meeting the challenges of the pandemic and will keep moving forward and live our faith to the best of our abilities. Keep up the good work. Thanks, thanks, thanks ... stay healthy, stay safe.

Father Tony