

Dear Friends,

As we navigate the remainder of this Lenten season, I ask you to join me in praying for a priest who was attacked during the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist last week. Thankfully, his injuries were minor, and he has since returned to his parish after a brief stay in the hospital. His bishop, The Most Reverend Christian Lépine, Archbishop of Montreal, said "We are all shocked by an act of violence taking place here in a place dedicated to peace."

This event is tragic and unfathomable. I hesitated to verbalize this during the homily or prayers of the faithful last weekend as I did not want to deliver such news during the celebration of Mass. However, this situation needs our attention and prayer as it affects the Universal Church. This event has ladled out another helping of shock, fear, disappointment, anger, frustration, confusion, and scandal. We are certainly not at a loss of what to pray for when it is time to place ourselves before the Lord. This is yet another reason for Catholics throughout the world to unite in prayer and hope for a brighter future.

Thank you everyone for your response and attention to the request for prayers at the end of Mass a few weeks ago. The current practice builds upon what had been established as a matter of custom. At some point, we will include this custom in the opening announcements before Mass, not so much as a reminder to ourselves but to the many visitors who choose to worship at All Saints every week. Let us use this order as we pray: First, The Universal Church (the Pope, etc. and, in particular, the priest in Montreal who was attacked and the parishioners of his parish). Second, the local church (our bishop and diocese, in particular those parishes who will be welcoming a new pastor or are facing difficulties). Third, the next person in the parish who will pass into eternal life (this happens once, if not twice a week), and, fourth, for our parish in this time of transition. Above all, the fourth prayer should remind us that there are many needs in our parish and that all of us will have to make and continue to make sacrifices together as we move forward. The days of division are over! There is no place for arguing or separation within the Catholic Church or in our parish. After the Lenten season, when the musical postlude is restored, it will be easier to determine the appropriate time to conclude our prayer.

Thank you to those who have contributed to the Five Fridays series this Lent. For me, this has been a most welcome opportunity for spiritual renewal. I look forward to listening to the guest speakers, who provide a different voice and perspective. These priests are used to preaching to their parishes so they find a great excitement to be able to preach to a different community. Our children help lead the praying of the Stations of the Cross, and many of us have found the supper afterwards a time to meet and connect with new parishioners. If you haven't yet attended, please join us.

This week's speaker will be our own Fr. Aquinas Beale, O.P. He is coming home to share with us his wisdom, in particular the tesina (thesis) which focuses on the Book of Ruth. Since his ordination to the Sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ last June, he has been working to complete this project before taking a new assignment this summer (I know he will welcome your prayers for this transition). His topic is

“Going Beyond the Bare Minimum: Living as Instruments of God’s Love”

As a parish, we have one more responsibility to attend to before the Easter season begins: the Catholic Ministries appeal. I am grateful that there has been a larger and more enthusiastic response than in years past -- participation has increased, many first-time givers have been welcomed, and, across the board, contributions have been generous. I thank those who have given and plead with those who have not yet given to please do so. As a matter of fairness, all members of the family must contribute so that we can reach our goal.

The next two bulletin columns will focus on what we will encounter in Holy Week. There is much to say about what will happen, but I can make one announcement now: His Excellency, The Most Reverend Salvatore Matano, will be the celebrant for the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. That he has chosen to celebrate this most sacred of feasts here at All Saints is a tremendous honor for me and for our parish.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones