

Good News

Dear Friends,

Saints on the Move

An amazing event happened last week in our parish. On Memorial Day, over eighty parishioners gathered in the Mausoleum for Mass. Many had experienced the loss of spouses, parents, family members, and close friends over the last year. In addition to remembering our deceased parishioners, the occasion was also a moment to remember those who died protecting us and our freedom. I am grateful to those who made this sacrifice, and I also thank the men and women of our parish who have served, or are currently serving, in the armed forces.

Also on this occasion, parishioners were able to see the statues of saints that at one time adorned the sanctuary and main entrance of St. Vincent Church. If you have attended a Mass of Christian burial when I preached, you have heard me mention in the homily that the act of Christian service unfolds during a Funeral Mass. The faithful gather together to offer the souls of their loved ones back to the Father in heaven. This moment is the realization that our worship on earth is connected with the heavenly banquet. In offering our prayers for our loved ones, we join them to the Communion of Saints and to the holy men and women who have gone before us. Our prayer expresses the hope that they too have reached Eternal Life.

The Communion of Saints has been lost in the recent theology of worship. The clearest indication is a lack of attention in prayer to the saints, but also in the failure to recognize them in our churches. Movements in recent decades have sought to simplify Catholic Church architecture and art. Statues of saints were removed from the scene because they were viewed as iconoclasts, images that we worship, displacing the center of worship that is Christ Jesus. Yet statues of saints were never meant to be worshipped but rather to remind us of the holy men and women whose conversion from a life of sin and doubt made them examples of the virtues of Christian life.

Over the years, our parishes have collected statues of saints that represented their history. The recent acquisition of the St. Patrick statue, restoration of the statue of St. Vincent, original to that Church, and their installation in the sanctuary takes note of both that history and their status as our patrons. St. Patrick is known as the patron of Ireland and model of evangelizers; St. Vincent, patron of priests and charity. I encourage you in your spiritual reading to learn about their lives -- and the lives of all the saints.

Let's not forget about the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It seems there are times when this Church has been ignored as we began to come together. Part of the reason is the fact that this Church remains open as a site of worship, which we know will not be true for much longer. I would like to make clear that when IHM Church is no longer used for worship, the stained glass windows that were installed in the 1980s will be removed and relocated to the Mausoleum. If there is one thing that was made clear at the Memorial Day Mass and has been emphasized in funeral homilies, the depiction of saints – either statues or windows – are crucial to Catholic theology both spiritually and in worship. The depiction of these saints in the Mausoleum will be a welcome addition to a space that lacked religious symbols and far better than windows with a view of the cemetery and certainly of the Park Avenue Car wash! This will grant a place of permanence for these items so that they will not be lost in the shuffle.

The Blessed Mother and the St. Joseph statues, which were in the Brennan Chapel, will be returned to their former locations on one of the high altars. The original St. Mary and St. Joseph statues will be moved to the Brennan Chapel from IHM when the time arrives. The statues of St. Patrick and St. Vincent will adorn the small niches in the sanctuary where the holy oils and the painting of the Blessed Mother are now. The family who donated the painting wishes the statue of St. Patrick to take its place and the painting to be relocated to the rectory. St. Vincent will be in the niche where the Holy Oils are currently housed. When the baptismal font was located in the sanctuary, this made sense, but this is no longer the case. The oils will be moved near the current baptismal font area for display and convenience. This episode of musical chairs will soon conclude, and the saints on the move will rest and enjoy the place of permanence they deserve as a vital part of our parish history.

As I announced at the conclusion of Masses last weekend, our parish goal for the diocesan Catholic Ministries Appeal has been met! Although we had hoped to collect \$4,000, the collection was almost \$8,000! A generous parishioner closed the remaining gap. In fact with the few donations that trickled in after the close of the Appeal, we are able to put some money away for next year's CMA. Again, I deeply appreciate the generosity of everyone who helped us reach our goal.

Deacon Martusciello has begun his ten-week summer assignment at All Saints. Soon, you will see him serving at the altar and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ which I know he has been eagerly anticipating in the years leading up to his recent ordination as a Transitional Deacon. What a thrill it is for me to have him at the rectory and here serving our parish.

In Christ,
Fr. Jones