

Dear Friends,

This weekend, the Church's liturgical calendar returns to the "Ordinary Sundays" of Ordinary Time. Once referred to as "Sundays after Pentecost," such titles are unfortunate for they lull the faithful into the perils of a too-contented faith. Yet we know that faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is anything but ordinary. And, we know that living our lives in accordance with the Catholic tradition in modern times is most certainly anything but ordinary!

This past Tuesday, my appointment as pastor took effect. I have to say I was a bit surprised when I received the call and subsequent letter with this assignment, especially with a parish as large as ours. It was, and remains, a moment of humility for me. Appointments like these for the recently ordained do not often come so soon. To all of you parishioners of All Saints, know that you have my deepest gratitude for your support.

This weekend marks my one year anniversary as administrator of the parish. If you recall, my first week did not start smoothly when the ceiling event at St. Vincent necessitated a sudden, though a long-expected and long-delayed, closing of this worship site. The closing ceremony in September brought closure and hopes for the future for some, but not all. Let us continue to pray and console our brothers and sisters in our community who still grieve and find this loss difficult. It is, as Deacon Joseph stated in his homily last weekend, the duty of all parishioners to help bring healing, thereby building the kingdom.

Change will always be a part of our existence. It brings with it an opportunity to live in the present and the necessary steps to move toward a brighter future. Too often, we resist change because we are comfortable and want to hold on to the past, fearful of what lies ahead. But several episodes in the Gospel reveal that we are not alone with this feeling. Many of the people who Jesus encountered, even his closest disciples, struggled to accept and believe. Again, I refer to Deacon Joseph's homily: not all will believe, including the ones who were chosen, because of fear.

For me, the Deacon's homily highlighted our belief in the True Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist -- the Source and Summit of our lives. Corpus Christi Sunday was an opportunity for all of us to renew our belief in this teaching through the Mass, Adoration, and the Sacraments. All things flow from It; that is why a solid understanding and expression of the Mass in worship is so crucial. Everything must flow from this center.

This weekend coincided with a renewal of those ministers who assist with the distribution of the Holy Eucharist at Mass. Properly termed "Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion," parishioners assist the priest and deacon (Ordinary Ministers who become so by virtue of their ordination) with the distribution of Holy Eucharist -- either at Mass to those who are present or to the many in our parish who are sick, home or hospital bound, and cannot be physically present at the celebration of the Sunday Mass. The training session sought to implement the guidelines for the sacraments that each parish in the diocese is expected to follow. This was not just a training session for these ministers; it was a long-overdue opportunity for retraining and spiritual renewal. I am grateful to the members of the parish liturgy committee, led by Stephanie Rodgers, who have drafted the new procedures. Please note that this procedure will look VERY different from what you have been used to seeing in year's past! However, the goal is always to progress toward greater fidelity, reverence, and devotion. We hope you will see this also as an opportunity for the renewal and revitalization of your approach to the Eucharist, not the begrudging endurance of yet one more change.

The new procedures will go live July 7 weekend when I will follow-up with more background on the history and the role of the Extraordinary Ministers at Mass. And, building upon the invitation that Deacon Joseph issued in his homily last week, I will speak more about how we as a parish can renew our commitment to the Lord in the Eucharist.

\*\*Mass for Thursday, July 4th will be held in the Mausoleum at 9:00am.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones

[Jesus] answered him, "I let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." - Lk 9:60