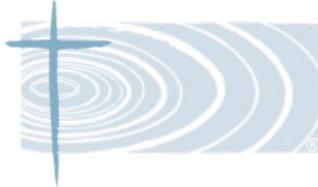


*Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ*



*Partners in the work of the Spirit*

May 2020

Dear St. Ann Parish Family,

I'm writing to you on our grieving loss of Father John.

*PRAYER: Jesus, may these words from my mouth echo the reflection of my heart to this parish family be acceptable to you, O Lord.*

My words to you reflect the Easter Season Scriptures from St. John Ch. 16.

Father John's spiritual, presentation to us hosted a consistent theme on Faith.

He weekly encouraged us to deepen our Faith, to root our Faith in prayer and live our Faith. He offered us Faith applications referencing a spiritual or corporal work of mercy without using these words.

Jesus taught his disciples what God wanted and needed them to know. Through these 21 centuries, disciples continued to multiply, to spread the WORD to the World. Father John, being a disciple of Jesus, completed everything God desired from him, thus, called him to eternal bliss. You and I are Father John's disciples obligated by our Baptism, to be today's disciples to the present generation till God informs us, **it is finished**. Father John may have had more to tell us, but God, pleased and satisfied, concluded his journey.

Recently, I read a quote saying. "When we struggle to profess our faith, Jesus will take our hand, accept our efforts and strengthen our belief. It is Jesus who will always lead us."

Paraphrasing St. Leo the Great, "In spite of Father John's withdrawal from our sight.... Faith does not fail, hope is not shaken and charity does not grow cold or old."

Infrequently during Father John's instructions to us on Faith, I had an urge to interrupt him, adding a thought or change one of his thoughts. I mentioned this to him, and his response was a smiley expression without words.

"Remember how we recognized Jesus in Emmaus at the Breaking of the Bread?" May our weekly "Spiritual Communion" these weeks continue to fill our hearts as we watched and prayed the Eucharist Prayers. I hope we have this "Spiritual Communion" prayer memorized to pray it daily in the morning, at meals, or evening prayer, so we remain in communion with our memorable streamline services by Father John.

*Jesus warned his disciples they will weep, mourn, grieve, feel heartbroken, scattered and alone but they will never be abandoned.*

*In John 16:1 Jesus says, "I have told you this so that you may not drift away."*

At our hearing of Fr. John's leaving, we are weeping, mourning, grieving, feeling heartbroken, scattered and alone, but being believers of Faith we will never be abandoned. Yes, for a while out of step with a world that moves on. However, in the end we need only be in step with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is our saving love of Jesus in our hearts today.

You now believe, you now know and now you can be sure of eternal bliss in your journey of service embraced in Love.

Hopefully we are growing our Faith deeper according to the Scripture passages Father John spoke to and the instructions he clarified for us. I am experiencing deeper Faith.

Because of our Faith, may we live in Hope to our resurrection by intentionally serving one another in Love being a Community in Communion.

Jesus lived and taught, in word and truth, all that His Father told him.

In his last hour, Jesus said, **it is finished**.

Fr. John says, "I have spoken to you all that Jesus revealed to me while I was with you these 22 years. Please carry on all that I have told you while I was with you. Today, May 16, 2020, concludes my time with you. **It is finished**. To my surprise and your surprise, my retirement began May 16, 2020, a year early, in eternal bliss."

July 5, 2020

Our previous familiarity of church at St. Ann's is in our recent history. The 21<sup>st</sup>. Century challenges us, disciples of St. Ann's congregation, to vision how our faith community will evolved into a church not yet clearly visible to us. But a church where Jesus' presence invites us to a viable **Faith Community in Communion** with all participants, a blending of diverse disciples, formed, strengthened, and actively connected through prayer and service.

Sunday's WORD, Mt. 13:23 The seeds of St. Ann's is on fertile soil. Listen to Understand. Then graciously distribute these seeds to make a positive influence on the People of God.

July 12 through 18<sup>th</sup> I will be in Donaldson for my annual retreat. The theme is on our Beloved St. Katharina Kasper 2018. All of you will be prayerfully remembered for our parish healings.

*Let us remember Father John's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 23, 2020 and Father John's 39<sup>th</sup> Ordination Anniversary on July 11, 2020. Celebrate these two dates in his honor.*

Many Blessings,

*Sister Melanie Rauh, PHJC*