



October 15, 2021
Friday of the Twenty-Eighth Week of Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners:

I hope this note finds you well!

I am happy to report that I returned to the Rectory on Monday, October 11 and I am also out of COVID isolation. As part of my recovery, I still have some supplemental oxygen 24/7, so I won't be back to saying Mass until I am off that completely. I had been planning a road trip to see my extended family in Texas with my mom for the last two weeks of October, but I will be remaining here. I figured it will be better to be home and I can visit family again next year. Once again, thank you for all the care and concern that has been extended to me, as well as, the invitations that you have extended for me to pray for you and your own needs. The ability to accompany your own needs has been a great blessing! Please, remember that whenever we gather for Mass or a group activity, we strongly encourage you to wear a facial covering whenever you are going to be in close proximity to another, especially if you have chosen to remain unvaccinated. It is a meaningful way that we can exercise care for one another. Please continue to pray for all those who continue to be on the front line of this pandemic. I know they are working hard, but are very much being stretched in so many ways, especially within the hospital setting. (My experience has been most difficult when it comes to food rather than patient care itself...)

I want to revisit an opportunity that I shared with you last month, which has garnered some interest by parishioners. You may recall that Fall 2019, I brought together leaders of our parish social concern ministries to promote collaboration and provide support for many parish initiatives designed so that we can use our God-given gifts in service of God and neighbor. Throughout the past two years, despite challenges presented by the pandemic, our parish outreach activities have remained vibrant thanks to creative adaptations of ministry leaders and because of gifts of time, talent and financial contributions from parishioners.

While that good work continues, we have identified a desire and need to take a deeper dive into the rich body of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). As Christians, trying to live authentically Catholic lives, we can sometimes feel overwhelmed and even discouraged about what we see happening in the world around us, and especially of late, the growing impasse between people that impacts our ability to work together for the common good. But through God's grace we take heart in knowing that our baptism in Christ calls us to see these challenges as opportunities to be salt and light: for this we need both God and one another.

Our Social Concerns Commission's first step is to invite anyone who is interested in joining or learning more about taking part in this effort to complete a one question survey, which can be found here: <https://forms.gle/L8gwgJm3BDrA3wH6>. We hope to bring together a diversity of ages, backgrounds and

perspectives. We also recognize that CST presents challenges to our own views and life circumstances, so don't think you can't be struggling with some or other aspect of CST to take part. Once we know who is interested, a member of our Social Concerns leadership team will reach out to you to share more and to learn more about your hopes for participation. Among all who want to participate, together we will seek consensus on the logistics (how, where and when to meet) and format (e.g., book club, periodic series) that will work best for everyone to achieve our purpose.

Thirdly, our parish is now in the midst of the Heart of a Shepherd Campaign, which is in support of our Diocesan seminaries, retired and newly-ordained priests, along with the opportunity to strengthen our own parish's Endowment Fund. Many parishes have already completed this, while others like us, are now undertaking their work with several parishioners already committing support. With a goal of around \$372,000 to be raised over three years, 50% will remain here for our Parish Endowment Fund, while the other portion will support the Diocesan 3-fold effort. If we exceed our goal, 80% of the excess will be returned to us. An informational video and details are available at: <https://youtu.be/C0D8vXiJJsg> or from the Diocesan Campaign site, www.catholiccommunity.org/heart-of-a-shepherd for details. Realizing that this is above any other support to the any other causes or our parish, I invite you to join me in offering any support that you may be able to provide!

And finally this month, I had been planning to share some "Looking back with gratitude reflections..." about the past ten years together. I enjoyed putting them together and hope you will enjoy reading them. They are attached to this email and will also be inserted into the bulletin.

Have a blessed remainder of the week. I'll see you soon...

St. Joseph, pray for us,
~Fr. Joe



October 17, 2021
Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parish Family:

Looking back with gratitude... I want to take the opportunity with you to reflect upon the blessings, challenges, and ultimate joy that has been mine since beginning my ministry as your Pastor ten years ago. I also hope that you might enjoy my reflections on the journey together thus far. Looking back, it was a Monday afternoon, July 13, 2011, after making an application for the open Pastorate of St. Joseph Parish, I drove away from St. Basil the Great in Brecksville for an interview with the Clergy Personnel Board at the Diocese of Cleveland. As the priests, deacons, and Personnel Director who composed that entity interviewed me for the possible recommendation as the next Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, I could tell that those gathered had truly listened to the hopes, dreams, and concerns of this community. Only two days later, a call would come asking, “whether or not I was alone, and whether or not I would accept Bishop Lennon’s offer to be the sixth Pastor of St. Joseph Parish – in my hometown and among my own “people”. I said, “yes...to both!”

About two weeks later, on July 26, 2011, as I accepted the appointment as your next Pastor at a meeting with Bishop Lennon, I was handed direct quotes, questions, and information from the Town Hall Meetings that the Personnel Board conducted with our parishioners, staff, and consultative councils. My first task was to call Father Sanson, who could not believe that it was me calling and was on vacation in Florida at the time, particularly as I believe everyone expected someone a little older and more seasoned, but on the cusp of turning 32, I was your new Pastor – the “kid” from South Strongsville...

I recall mentioning in my first weekend’s worth of homilies back in 2011 that I was very much aware that “a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household (Mark 6:4),” but that we would work together to give it our best shot. I truly hope that is what has happened over these past ten years! I fondly remember my early days of getting to meet you – I vividly remember meeting some families early on my first official day at the 2011 Pet Blessing, without kids, who now have wonderful families who still regularly attend Mass, the First Health Fair that same weekend and seeing Officer Don Poney, who was my own 8th grade DARE officer at Albion Junior High, and all the other events of those first weeks. We were getting to know one another and a bond was beginning to form, which was unlike any other that I had experienced thus far in just over five years of priestly ministry. Yes, I had been called to care for other parish communities before as a priest, but this was different as we were truly in this together – people and pastor – and I was regularly being called “our pastor”. There is power in those words.

Quite soon after arriving, I recalled what I had been asked during the Personnel Board interview and what I had read about your own hopes, dreams, and history. I wanted to move these words from paper, so as to give voice, feeling, and a personal face and nature to our community. So we had our Listening Sessions. If you recall, those were facilitated and allowed me a chance to listen and hear, but not immediately respond to what was shared but rather I waited until my Formal Installation in November 2011, when I said:

Through my listening sessions, I have heard much from you. I am grateful for that! I have heard you – loud and clear – I have heard your joys, hopes, and yes, even your frustrations. I have heard “a people” dedicated not only to their faith in Christ, but to making St. Joseph be the best that it can be. Tonight, I assure you, I share that same goal! From these same sessions emerged six themes. Over the next year, our prayer, energy, and time will focus on: community, liturgy, Spiritual life and Faith Formation, Participation, Youth, and Leadership.

I look forward to ministering among you as one who appreciates collaboration with all of you (people and staff alike) and I am hopeful – and really, counting on, your, all of your active participation in building on the vibrancy of our parish!

I have noticed that our parish has been and very much wants to be “a family” – united as brothers and sisters in Christ. I will minister among you and assist in forming a community that fosters our spiritual relationship with Jesus, one that deepens our common pursuit of holiness, and enlivens our Catholic faith – nourished each week by the Eucharist!

As it was then, it still is today ten years later, that one of the most important aspects of these remarks is the desire that I have that we all continue to work together with our God and Lord, under the patronage of St. Joseph, to ensure the strength and success of our parish. We have benefitted much from those who have gone before and we are writing a living legacy now for those who are to come after us. While COVID-19 has impacted our Mass attendance, we are more active, possess more participation in various activities, have improved our physical plant, and grown spiritually, while becoming debt-free. We did all of this together! You have been, are, and will continue to be invited to be a part of the development of our living legacy...each and every one of you! This is why I take great comfort in the work of so many people – parishioner and professional staff alike – parishioners and members of our Parish Finance Council and of our Parish Pastoral Council and its five commissions, and along with our Parish Pastoral Staff – who all give voice to continued hopes, dreams, opinions, and yes, the occasional frustrations of our community. You never hesitate to approach your fellow parishioners, me, or the staff with your ideas that are discerned and discussed. The exchanges that began in those Listening Sessions continue even today in the very active work of these methods of consultation and dialogue! If you're interested in seeing more, check out the Parish Pastoral Council Notes sometime on our parish website at www.sjohio.org/ppc. You are well-represented!

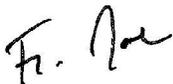
And so with this all in mind, I write a few days after my Tenth Anniversary as your Pastor. I was told early in my priesthood that “joy is the mark of a grateful heart”. I am certainly very happy and blessed to be with you, but also still very joyful. Those words ring as loud, clear, and true today as it did at the beginning of our time together - thank you for being a part of it! We have prayed, laughed, cried, and celebrated so much together. I know that I made some mistakes along the way and I apologize for those yet I am so grateful to God for all that we have shared and experienced together.

I possess a joyful heart, for many things, but particularly for the life of our parish – for what has been, what is, and together, what we can still be – all that I have come to know, love, and experience during our time together. As Christ has been present among us thus far, Christ is still present here and will be our companion in the years ahead. As it has been since our parish's foundation in June 1946, the Strongsville community has been enriched by our presence. From the days of Fr. Joseph McGraw, our founding pastor, whose chalice continues to be used regularly for special Masses, through the building of our church under Fr. McDonough, the ingenuity of Fr. Donohue, the spirituality of Fr. Dodd, and the compassionate-care of Fr. Sanson, and my own experiences with some challenging health moments, Christ has been present and active here in the lives of all our parishioners and all who have experienced his presence through our own words and actions.. Not even the destruction of our first church and half the school by the powerful 1965 Palm Sunday Tornado, nor the experience of our communal heartache in December 2019 could crush our spirit. These events shaped us, but our definition as a community is far beyond any one event. We are people filled with many gifts and great resilience...

During my Formal Installation, Bishop Lennon instructed me, "Remember, my brother, Joseph, always be a loving father, a gentle shepherd, and a wise teacher of your people, so that you may lead them to Christ who will strengthen all that you do." I recommit myself to do this to the best of my ability and ask that you will continue to keep me in your prayers, as you can be sure that I will continue to pray daily for you. We pledge to continue what began in 1946, so let us strive, with Jesus' divine assistance, to be the best disciples of Jesus we can be. I somewhat feel we are in the midst of another resurgence as we work to emerge from COVID-19. I cannot wait to see what God still has in store for us. When you can be other places, I thank you for choosing to be here and I hope you will stay along for the ride! I remain glad I said "yes..."

St. Joseph, our patron and guide, pray for us.

With a joyful heart,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Joe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Reverend Joseph R. Mamich
Pastor



Saint Joseph CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

75th Anniversary Advent Music Concert
3pm

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022

Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary
Celebrating Our Consecration to St. Joseph
10am Mass

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022

Grand Celebration Dinner
6pm
Strongsville Recreation Center
Catered Dinner, Drinks, and Dancing
Details and ticket information to follow.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022

Closing of our 75th Jubilee
Noon Mass
Reception to follow in the Holy Family Center.

DIAMOND JUBILEE STEERING COMMITTEE

*Jeff and Neomia Branic, Doug and Debbie Januszewski, Jason and Jodi Januszewski,
Art and Cindy Leonard, Fr. Joe Mamich, Dawna Meng, Mike and Mary Lou Shumate, and Joe and Pat Weber*