

NOTE FROM FR. JOHN

May 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

We have had a very, very, quiet week. Your donations to the parish keep flowing in by mail, in person, and online. More about that a little later. Thank you very much. This week I received an anniversary card from the Cardinal celebrating the 48th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood on May 27th. I am appreciative. The majority of priests in the diocese were ordained in the month of May. (When I was ordained in 1972 there were 13 of us. Today, only 5 of us remain in active ministry). In 48 years of priesthood, while there have been many challenges, none match this virus, but fortunately, to my knowledge, our parishioners are maintaining their health and safety. Keep up the good work. We know the expression "If you have your health, you have everything." No truer than at this time. On another note, a quick reminder: I have noticed some suspicious emails in my account. Be very wary of any emails that claim to be from me asking for assistance, money, etc. Be wary of any text messages seeking help, money, or assistance. They are not from me! Do not open any links! Do not respond.

(1) Food insecurity remains a major concern for so many in our area. I am amazed how prices have spiked at our local grocery stores. Our parishioner, Stephanie Fuller, has offered a great suggestion. Our teens will organize a food drive, listing the items the T-SH food pantry needs. The teens will set up boxes in our church driveway. You need not get out of your cars. Just simply drop your food donation in the boxes. Jimmy's Soft Serve will park in our lot if you are looking for a treat. The target date is June 14th, the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ and Flag Day. Christ fed many during his ministry. In his name, we are called to feed our sisters and brothers in need. More to follow.

(2) As Memorial Day approaches a thought occurred to me. In December 1941 our nation awarded posthumously the first Combat Medic Badge. It is given to a soldier assigned to a medical unit providing support to infantry troops or Special Forces engaged in active ground combat. I would like to see our nation authorize a civilian equivalent for those doctors, nurses, aides and other personnel who staffed and maintained our hospitals and nursing homes during this pandemic. It is a badge that can be worn on a hospital

gown or civilian attire with pride and distinction, an acknowledgement by a grateful nation of the selfless sacrifice made by so many in the face of an invisible enemy.

- (3) While the diocese has made no definite plans on how and when masses will resume, this is what we know so far: (a) distancing and personal protective equipment will be required; (b) the sign of peace will be omitted; (c) communion will be offered in the hand; (d) distribution of the Precious Blood will be suspended; (e) how we line up for communion might require some changes; (f) the obligation to attend Sunday mass will most likely be suspended for a period of time to accommodate those who remain hesitant about being in large crowds. Also, be prepared to accept that some parishes may be forced to eliminate masses due to lack of attendance. Other possible alterations: elimination of holy water fonts, placement of permanent sanitizing stations at church entrances, elimination of missalettes in pews, suspension of choirs, etc.
- (4) As a point of information, the following parishes will be open for new pastors on July 1: Hastings/Ardsley, Hawthorne, Harrison, Mamaroneck, White Plains, Chester, Staten Island, and Manhattan. I have mentioned these before, but Hawthorne, our neighbor, is the new addition. I wish Msgr. Barry well. We have been friends for over 55 years. In addition, I suspect, without any hard evidence, that other parishes will become open over the next several months. Remember, we are ordaining only one priest for the diocese this month. Do the math.
- (5) The month of May traditionally embraces graduations, marriages, first communions, confirmations, and wedding anniversaries. In our live streamed masses we remember all those cheated out of their special moment. Knowing that you have reached a milestone in your life, even without the attendant celebration, deserves our acknowledgement and recognition. Not having family and friends to share in your achievement is, unfortunately, another casualty of this pandemic.
- (6) Cardinal's Appeal update: Goal: \$48,000; pledged: \$34,000; needed: \$14,000. Do the best you can. Thank you to all who have already pledged. As they say in the film industry: "I would like to put this in the can." Regarding parish finances, I did a quick calculation. Between March 15, 2019 and May 15, 2019 we deposited into our operating account from

collections and other sources (rebate from Cardinal's Appeal, interest on our savings account with the diocese, etc.) \$132,000. This year, in the same time frame (with masses suspended), we deposited \$93,000 (including \$28,400 from the government PPP program). In short, without the PPP, we are taking in roughly 50% of what we took in last year. Remember, however, that we no longer have a second collection each month for the parish. It was suspended on January 1st this year. Also, ticket sales for the 125th anniversary dinner in June 2019 (subsequently canceled) brought in extra funds. Considering that businesses are closed and that many are unemployed or underemployed, we are holding our own. Thank you for thinking of your parish in these difficult times. All parishes are in the same boat. In fact, we are better off than most.

- (7) On Friday afternoon May 22nd we will have a chance to experiment with live streaming a small wedding at the Magdalene. The bride would like her guests, who cannot be present due to social distancing, to witness the exchange of vows and rings. The wedding will be limited to immediate family, best man, and maid of honor. She is willing to set up the live streaming from her computer. I did not anticipate experimenting live streaming special ceremonies/sacraments so soon. I will let you know how it turned out. And while we are on the topic of marriage, two things: First, a number of 2020 weddings have already set a new date in 2021. If you are thinking of a 2021 wedding, it is not too early to scope out the date in 2021. Second, because of the pandemic, pre-Cana has gone virtual. 600 engaged couples in the diocese have not been able to attend the standard, in-person meetings. For further info contact nyfamilylife.org.
- (8) Finally, we give a shout-out to the Marymount Sisters and the residents of Kendal who have been restricted to their rooms for almost 2 months. Not pleasant, but warranted by the circumstances of our time. You are not forgotten! Nor do we forget, this Memorial Day weekend, those whose sacrifice secured our freedom.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS: Religious Education Forms are in the mail. Please fill them out and return them by June 15, 2020. Forms for new students to our program can be found on-line on our website or in the back of the church. For information call Dotty Meehan at 914-552-7628 or dotmeehan@aol.com.

Prayer for an Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

CARDINAL'S STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2020: As of 5/15//2020

Goal	Pledged	# of Donors	Donor Goal
\$48,000	\$34,416	81	130

To make your gift online, visit cardinalsappeal.org.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: Reminder: Please do not tape or staple the envelopes. Just seal them. The tape or staple causes problems with D. P. Murphy when they calculate the envelopes. Thank you so much!

ANYONE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE? Please contact rectory at 914-631-0529 if you need help during this difficult time (food shopping, etc.).