FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

JANUARY 22, 2017

This week there was a serious fire in an apartment building on Beaumont. Several apartments were engulfed in smoke and flames, including the homes of parishioners and a family of an eighth grader in our school.

One of the residents told me, "Father, you can't believe what it's like to lose everything until it happens to you".

I was proud of how our parish responded. Our new principal, Ms. Valerie Sevino, immediately went to the site of the fire, having heard one of her students was affected. Fr. Urbano was also there to assess the needs of the families. Our eighth grade teacher, Frank Iurelli, has offered great support to his student and his family. The Borgatti family helped coordinate some merchants in the neighborhood to provide meals. Long term, we will work with Catholic Charities and local real estate representatives to see how our families can best get back on their feet and stay in the neighborhood.

Have you noticed that sometimes it is tragedy that brings us together? Here in the Bronx we live on top of each other--literally--and yet it is so easy to isolate ourselves. We go about our daily lives in close quarters with thousands of people, but we keep to ourselves. We see the same people each day and don't even know each other's names. At most we wave or say hello, but we don't make many new friendships.   We have no idea what the other people are suffering or what they might need.

There are surely many reasons for our isolation. Sometimes it is because we are too busy, or because we are afraid, or we don't know if the other person wants to get to know us.

A tragedy like this fire can remind us that life is short, material possessions are ephemeral, and that we all need friendship and community.   This week, let's reach out a little bit more; let's ask someone their name, find out what they do, what they need, what we can do to be a better neighbor.

God Bless,
Father Jonathan