

From the Pastor's Desk:

I would like to say thank you to all those who asked about my recent vacation and the missions trip I went on. It was good to get a little time away (and to WARMER temps), but it was also great to be back. The original trip plan was changed and we went to Texas and Mexico instead of Puerto Rico. I got to see a lot of the conditions of the migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border and witnessed the wonderful response being made by dedicated religious sites and an army of volunteers who come to assist those in need. I will put up some pictures of the trip with captions on the webpage (annunciationgardner.org). There were many people I met who were stuck between countries and in great need of assistance. One young teenager we met fled being killed in his native country in Central America and made his way to the border to request asylum only to be turned back by Mexican officials before he could plead his case to the U.S. authorities. He even carried a letter from his local Bishop to verify his story and request he be given assistance. He broke down crying as he told us of his story and his fears of what will come next for him. The legitimate need for border security, combined with the needs of legitimate asylum seekers is more complex than it is often presented to us. It will take a lot of work from all sides to develop a reasonable and sane set of responses to this situation.

It struck me as I read the Gospel about putting out nets that we are called only to put down nets to help to gather people to the Lord, but also to put down "safety nets" to help those in need. We are called to both of these as a Catholic Christian Parish. Our charitable efforts, our practical support to others, our prayer which brings Divine assistance, and our witness that helps to cast a net to help others find the Lord - all these fulfill this mission of Jesus.

We had a planning meeting this past week to put together our Lenten activities for this year. In addition to the Lenten Pilgrimage where a different parish hosts a talk, prayers, and fellowship each Wednesday evening, we will be offering in the parish our own ways to make this Lent a spiritually profitable one for all. Watch for the announcements in the bulletin and on the website.

Plumbing repairs will begin at Holy Spirit after Finance Committee considered the costs and we agreed to move forward. As we are able to address these neglected repairs we build a better future and leave our facilities in better shape as we move forward. I have been in contact with the architect working on our handicap access, I'll keep you posted when things are ready to begin. The next step is to have the capitol projects committee complete a comprehensive assessment of our capitol needs. Please be patient with us as we prepare the yearly donation statements for your taxes. We had a little computer entry issue and just want to be sure that they are accurate when you get them. We have a person very knowledgeable in the software helping, and Joanne has been keeping a list and we will get them out ASAP.

Let us all continue to pray for a spirit of cooperation at the national level as our government works to craft the responses to issues that effect all of us. We can also consider how we can help to weave and cast nets that provide safety and bring others to the Lord.

God Bless,
Fr. Steve