

**Twentieth -First Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 25, 2019**

From the Desk of Rev. Fr. Anthony C. Ekanem, MSP:

HOW BLESSED WE ARE

Have we ever thought about how multi-cultural or diverse we are in our parish community? Without naming where each of us is from, our Catholic Community is truly special. When we come in to celebrate the Eucharist, take a few seconds, count the people who resemble you and those different from you. They have come from different directions to our Church to worship our God. Like Jesus said, 'the people will come from north and south, east and west, and take their places in the Kingdom.' How do you feel about their presence in our faith community?

Today, both Isaiah and Jesus speak of people from the ends of the earth being welcome into the presence of the Lord. They remind us that the Lord comes to "gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory." (Is 66:18). In this first Reading, Isaiah is remarkable in its universal imagery. See how he presents a vision of all peoples coming to Jerusalem from the lands where they were scattered, the vast array of God's people, coming on every form of transport, suggesting a scene of women and men, and the wealthy and the poor. (Is 66: 26). Not only will the Gentiles bring back the dispersed people of Israel, but they will also present them as an offering to the Lord. They will bring the usual offering of grains, perhaps in the form of bread and cakes, while foreign nations will bring the people of Israel themselves as an offering to God. An essential purpose of the gathering of Israel is for worship. The sufferings of exile and the saving hand of God will extend to all the nations.

Like the nations streaming to Jerusalem in the first reading, this portion from the Letter to the Hebrews has a similar theme of homecoming envisioning the return of the people of God but not without hardship. The author talks about the kind of training God gives and allows us to face. We indeed trained in the school of suffering. People can get so hurt in this our world that they become very bitter for a long time. On the other hand, suffering can be an opportunity to grow. The value of suffering lies not in pain but rather in what the sufferer makes of it. Suffering can purify one's soul and transform one's character. Suffering can bear fruit. It is an indispensable part of in our becoming genuinely more human, mature, and compassionate. Therefore, pain is a necessary ingredient in building up a knowledgeable Christian person.

There is a Greek maxim, "to learn it is necessary to suffer." "Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord ... he scourges every son he acknowledges" (Hebrews 12:5). This metaphor connects beautifully with the believers who endure faithfully and painfully with Jesus, of whom the author wrote, "Son though He was, learned obedience from what He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). This portion gives a consoling suggestion for our consideration on how to handle suffering and discipline in our various situations. "At times, all discipline seems a cause, not a joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it. "So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed." (Hebrews 12:11-13).

In our Gospel reading too, the requirements for entrance into that kingdom entails suffering, sacrifice, and discipline. 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside, knocking and saying, I do not know where you come from.' (Luke 13 24-26). God allows us to suffer, yes, but only because good can come from it. That idea of claiming to be in His accompany; or being near to Him, eating with Him, listening to His teaching, is not enough to be admitted through the narrow gate. Our suffering or pain can bring us closer to God. For those who suffer or who humble themselves will be exalted, in other words, "For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who be last." (Luke 13:30). These sayings were understood to refer to the Jews who did not accept the message of Jesus on suffering during Luke's day. We can rightly conclude that there is strength in diversity. Blessed with people from various backgrounds, and that discipline can teach us clearly how to follow Jesus Christ in this world.

Back To School

This next weekend Fr George will bless all students preparing to go back to school at all the Masses. Please, plan to attend with your children for blessing for their safety and protection through another school year.

Stewardship

Tithing - God's Plan for Giving on Sunday For 08/18/19 our Offering was \$ 2,705.00
In observance to Labor Day the Rectory will be closed on Monday September 2, 2019.
This Sunday second collection is for Church Property Insurance.

2019 Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal Update

Hello Father Anthony and members of the parish, **Congratulations!**
The parish officially reached its goal! Here are your numbers:

Goal: \$39,500
Pledged: \$40,163
Paid: \$35,936 (60% of cash paid over goal comes back to the parish as a rebate)
Participants: 128
Ave. Gift: \$314
Percent of goal: 102% (You did it! The tradition continues...!)
Overall participation: 10% (It's probably a little higher since many gifts are anonymous...)
Parish still needs 43 more participants to reach your participation goal of 168

Thank you so much for your cooperation again this year!

Anthony Piscitiello, Campaign Manager
The 40th Cardinal's Annual Stewardship Appeal
To donate you can go to cardinalsappeal.org, click on Donate, select an amount, and direct your gift to our Church: Immaculate Conception, Yonkers

Food Collection

Food Collection: Next Sunday September 1, we have our monthly food collection for the needy in our community—and as always thank you for your generosity in helping those less fortunate than *ourselves*.

The security cameras are now in place inside and outside our Church. 24 Hour Surveillance Both Video & Audio

Sundays Readings:

First Reading: Isaiah 66: 18-21 p. 27

The prophet spoke of the Lord's coming to gather all nations together. They would proclaim God's glory, bringing offerings to Jerusalem in clean vessels. The Lord chose some as priests.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 117: 1, 2 p. 28 *Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.*

Second Reading: Hebrews 12: 5-7, 11-13 p. 28 *The author of Hebrews offered encouragement: "Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord... Make straight.. that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed.*

Gospel: Luke 13:22-30 p. 28

Jesus told the people, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate." Make yourself known to the Lord so that the door will open for you. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets will be sage in God's reign. "Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.

Church Family Directory

It is now time to make your arrangements with your family to take your photograph with LIFE TOUCH this week.

On Thursday, August 29, 2019,
Friday, August 30, 2019
On Saturday, August 31, 2019
On Sunday, September 1, 2019

First Friday

Mark your calendar for our September First Friday devotion, which is on Friday, September 6, 2019.

11:00 - 11:45 am - Sacred Heart Devotion Prayer

11:45 - 12:00 noon - Confessions

12:05 pm - Mass

You are invited!

- Religious Education Registration 2019-2020 **If you have not registered your children you will be able to do so September 5, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm). We are offering Adult classes for those who would like to become Catholics and those that still need a sacrament. Adult classes start in October .**
- Bible Sharing: Do you want to learn more about the Word of God during the week, in English. Call and let us know whether Wednesday beginning in the month of September is convenient for you.
- St Paul the Apostle Church 602 McLean Avenue Yk, 10705 will have a Healing Mass on Tuesday night September 3rd at 7:30pm. Celebrant Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jose Puthenparambil, PH.D. Mission Diocese of Vijayapuram, Kerala, INDIA

**Mass Schedule for the week of
August 24, 2019 to August 31, 2019
Special Intentions for this week**

Saturday, August 24, 2019:

12:05pm— John Romano * Walid Hasou & Family

5:00pm— Rose Kunny * Anthony Kunny

7:30pm - Almas Del Purgatorio * Sylvia Heichel

Sunday, August 25, 2019:

7:30 am – For the Parishioners

9:00 am – Gabriela Pereyra * St Denis Family

11:00 am - Bridget Puma & Fred J. Ventruda + * Maria Ventrudo

Monday, August 26, 2019:

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05pm Mary A. Galvin + * Karen Ramos

Tuesday August 27, 2019

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05pm – Wally Elias Filpo * Luisa Filpo

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

8:15am - Cesar Dominic + *Marta Vega

12:05 pm – Hector Rene Gabriel * Jose Gabriel

Thursday, August 29, 2019:

8:15am - In Thanksgiving * Hannah Linus

12:05 pm— Thomas J. Bonanno * The Bonanno Family

7:00 pm - Sibana Suares * Paula Suares

Friday, August 30, 2019:

8:15am - Available/Disponibile

12:05 pm – Mary A. Galvin + *Helen Aggrey

Saturday, August 31, 2019:

12:05pm— Pedro Marino + * Aurora Marino

5:00pm— Elizabeth & Joseph Anthony + * Mr. & Mr. Anthony

7:30pm - Available/Disponibile

+Indicates deceased * Indicates the person (s) who requested the Mass.

Prayer for Families

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer. Amen.