

“PEACE BE WITH YOU, DO NOT BE AFRAID”

Dear Parishioners,

The words above are repeated by Jesus many times throughout his public ministry, and especially during the Easter Season. He tells his followers that fear is our real enemy, when he says, “fear is useless, what is needed is faith.” Fear of the past, the present, the future, what we know, what we think we know, and what we admit that we don’t know.

We can not let our fears define who we are. In conversations with people, there is the general feeling that they can’t wait for things to get back to normal. Like the people of Israel who found themselves in a foreign land, we too are in exile. Like the people of Israel, we too have been given an opportunity to reflect on our lives. Like them, there can be no going back to normal.

As we continue to assess our present experience, we are slowly coming to the realization that the future will be different. This time is like being on a long retreat. We put aside our daily routine and concerns and allow God to speak to us in the silence of our hearts.

I know how challenging it can be to be under one roof with the same people for a long period of time. That’s probably why in seminary and religious life there were times of imposed silence. We all want and need our space and me time.

When I think about the future, I am concerned about the invisible emotional affects that covid 19 will have for so many people. So many people who live alone, and have no one to share with, or are just afraid to let others know of their struggles. While finances are important, our spiritual and emotional wellbeing is also important.

Jesus can break through our walls, and locked rooms, our tombs of despair and hopelessness. Through this faith community he can reach out to those who are in need. He does that at our dinner tables, when we share a meal, and when we pray together as a family. He does that when we show concern for your neighbors.

I am so encouraged by those who have been finding new ways to celebrate, bring joy, provide services, continue the process of Catholic Education, and continue to support me and Msgr. Iacovacci, with your prayers and good wishes.

We continue to offer Mass and pray for you. Please let us know if there is anything, we can do for you. Sometimes just having someone to talk to is all we need to feel better.

I look forward to the new normal. A time of reassessed priorities, less complaining about things that don't really matter, and of not taking each other for granted. I never would have thought that at this time of my life I would have such an opportunity to grow and learn and change.

Like the apostles locked in the room for fear of the people, I also feel afraid and confined, and wonder what the future will look like. I, like Thomas, want the certainty to know that Jesus is alive. I pray for the grace to hear Jesus say to me and all of us, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid." And like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, to recognize him in the breaking of the bread.

Be well, stay safe, use common sense, and remember that if we have died with Christ, we will also rise with him.

Father Gagne