

Pastoral Message: September 12, 2021

I am away with my family until September 19th for vacation. Fr Mat will be available in case needed during that time, and I am thankful for his help in covering this weekend. The weekend of September 18th and 19th we start our faith formation. Because of COVID-19, we will be doing our classes on Zoom, at least to start. On this note as you know, sadly, we will not be able to have the party for Fr Mat's retirement and my transition here. Most importantly, Fr Mat and I were hoping this could be a time to celebrate all of St Agnes. We now plan to do that in the Spring and very much look forward to it!

I want to offer a few thoughts about faith formation this year. Our church teaches that the family is the domestic church, and we are grateful for all of our parents who are the primary formators and educators of their children in the faith. Anytime we do a baptism we recognize this and we, the community, make a commitment that we will help support the parents as they carry out this mission. I have heard parents in public baptism mention how much it means as they raise their child to know they have that support. I also hear often from parents how their children teach them the faith and how their child has helped them grow closer to God. This is true for all of us sometimes. I am amazed by the spiritual insights that our children have in the community. I have been working with Bill Donahue who is really focusing on family-based catechesis which throughout the year invites parents to join their children in activities to grow in the faith as a family. We are excited for a new year of faith formation and would like to thank our parents for all they do on a day to day basis and for truly being the domestic church.

And, finally, we remember especially this weekend the tragic events of September 11th. May we continue as disciples of Jesus to work for peace and justice in our world. I share with you a prayer written by Bro. Darrell Burns, S.J.

Fr. Andy

Anniversary Prayer for 9/11

Holy God,
Creator of all people and all nations,
It is with sorrow and apprehension we remember the tragic events
That occurred on this day.

We lift to You in prayer all those who died
In the Twin Towers, at the Pentagon, and on United Airlines Flight 93
In Shankesville, Pennsylvania.

We entrust them to Your loving care.
Console their families, friends, and all who mourn this loss
In the hope that all who trust in You find peace and rest in Your Kingdom.

We pray for those who courageously responded to provide aid and comfort to the afflicted.
May their painful memories of that day
Be healed and transformed into strength and positive resolution.

We also pray for ourselves as we seek Your strength and guidance.
We live in the aftermath of this tragedy and under the shadow of future acts of aggression;
We stand in need of Your assistance.

Enable us, Dear God, to put an end to fear:
By resolving to live lives that are based on respect for one another;
By resolving to abide in a peaceful manner
and never settle disagreements in our lives in a violent way;
By resolving not to fall into the trap of blaming entire ethnic groups, races, or religions
in response to acts of hostility;
By resolving that justice, not revenge, prevail in our world.

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Let us resolve that in the face of hatred, we will show love;
That in times of despair, we will be voices of hope
And creators of new dreams;
That in times of darkness, we will be sources of light.

Let us resolve that we never regard forgiveness as weakness,
But rather as a source of strength in our lives and in our world.

And, let us honor the memory of nearly 3,000 individuals who died on September 11, 2001
By resolving, with Your help Almighty God,
To truly live this way so You may be glorified and Your love made known to others through us.
Amen.