

# THE PASTOR'S POST

## ESPERAR Y ESPERAR + WAIT AND HOPE

Dear Parish Family:

It is Tuesday as I write this. I have just returned from a 45th Anniversary Mass and celebration for the group home where I volunteer. The preacher, Fr. Francis Pizzarelli, SMM, referenced the recent autobiography of Pope Francis entitled *Hope*. (I downloaded it a few months ago and just started reading it. It is wonderful!) In the Introduction to the book, Pope Francis writes, "People often say 'wait and hope'—so much so that the word *esperar* in Spanish means both 'to hope' and 'to wait'—but hope is above all the virtue of movement and the engine of change: It's the tension that brings together memory and utopia to truly build the dreams that await us. And if a dream fades, we need to go back and dream it again, in new forms, drawing with hope from the embers of memory. We Christians must know that hope doesn't deceive and doesn't disappoint: All is born to blossom in an eternal springtime" (ix).

The disciples in the Gospel today...**wait and hope**. The Church in these days...waits and hopes. Our parish...waits and hopes!

I'd like to share a little bit with you about waiting and hoping this week. I had planned to share some of these thoughts before the passing of Pope Francis but perhaps they are even more relevant today.

**The Church. Waiting and Hoping.** By the time the bulletin is printed, we will have celebrated the funeral liturgy for Pope Francis. For me, while I am grateful he is at peace after these months of suffering, I am heartbroken. Pope Francis has inspired my priesthood and my life in ways I cannot explain fully here. Homilies, letters, press conferences, etc. always left me encouraged about the state of the Church and the world. Even when I found some things he said challenging - which was quite often - I tried to accept the challenge. What a loss.

His passing on Easter Monday is a most appropriate time. The reason for our hope is Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Having prayed with the Church on Easter Sunday, he now prays for the

Church and each one of us having received the gift of Easter - new life with Christ. There are prayer cards for Pope Francis available at the doors of the Church and Chapel this week. Please pray for him!

We now hope and wait, praying for the Church to discern well the will of the Holy Spirit. Soon our focus will move to Pentecost, a call to focus ever more powerfully on the Holy Spirit. Let us pray for this gift of discernment in these days as we wait and hope!

**The Parish - Waiting and Hoping.** I will try to speak at many Masses this weekend to provide a little update of the financial realities of our parish. These are not my favorite talks to give but I believe you need to know what we are up against and what we are working towards in the days, weeks, and months ahead. Before Easter, as we started to go through our numbers, the reality of our financial situation has become clearer and we are faced, like so many families these days, having to make some tough decisions. To say I feel this weight is an understatement.

We find ourselves in a difficult situation because of three major reasons: the loss of convent rental which provided an approximately \$20,000 monthly income to the parish (\$240,000 annually), the payment of the diocesan settlement which will approach \$400,000 in a few months, and the practical realities of our buildings. Honestly, we cannot keep up and the loss of the convent rental income is catching up to us. The repairs we have had to make this past year - which are for the better of the parish for the future, for sure - are only a fraction of what we need to do. We are blessed by the Millenium Fund, established in 2000, which assists with some of these projects but the volume, and in some cases, the immediate need to complete some of these projects creates a very challenging time financially.

Over the next few months, we will have to make some more changes that impact personnel and expenses while also attempting to create a plan for the future.



# EL POST DEL PÁRROCO

## ESPERAR Y ESPERAR + WAIT AND HOPE

So.... **I need your help.**

After this weekend, I want to form two working groups: **real estate** and **priorities and plans**. We need people gifted in these areas to come forward. I need the real estate group to focus on renting and/or developing a plan to sell the convent on St. Brigid's Lane. I need the priorities and plans group to help us go through every building and to develop a step by step plan of what we need to do and the best order to do it. I do not expect either of these "working groups" to be overwhelming in their request for time and meetings. If you have some background that can assist in either of these areas, I ask that you please reach out to me at the Parish Office or via email to [fatherjohn@saintbrigid.net](mailto:fatherjohn@saintbrigid.net).

Second, we need people to come forward to "step up". I ask you to be as generous as you can in the Sunday collection. This, for both practical and spiritual reasons, needs to be what we survive on - the offerings given to us by God returned so others may be blessed. Collections have risen over the past two years in very positive amounts and this is part of the reason we have made it this far.. If you are not making an offering to the Sunday collection, we need your support. If you are already and you're able to increase your offering, please consider doing so.

We will also need people and groups to step up in two other ways. In the weeks ahead, I will start to list **minor projects that need to be completed** for the parish. We need those who have skills in the areas of landscaping, construction, painting, and the like to come forward and either to donate services. This is a great example of stewardship - returning the gifts God has given you back to the life of the Church. Second, there are going to be some **clearer requests for volunteers** to come forward to help us in various ministries and areas. Please be open to these requests and if you can help, please respond!

Third, I have begun more seriously investigating the possibility of establishing a capital campaign which will allow us to make some major


repairs in the years ahead. The parish last carried out a capital campaign in 2015 for the renovation of the Church and St. Anthony Hall (among many other things). At this point, I don't see another way for us to "get ahead" without such a campaign.

I know this is a lot...I do not feel I would be a good pastor here without sharing this with you. While there are certainly challenges ahead, I see many reasons for hope! I hope these challenges are going to bring us closer together, maybe inspire us to get even more involved in the life of our parish, and do more to reach out to others. The weight has lifted for me a bit in these weeks because of your spirit, generosity, kindness, and outreach. We are going to be OK.

**In today's Gospel, the disciples waited and hoped.** Jesus came. He always comes to answer the needs of His people. Indeed, we are going to be OK. Hope does not disappoint.

Please pray for me. I promise the same.



 DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

### MEMORIAL MASS for POPE FRANCIS



Celebrated by the  
Most Reverend John O. Barres

at the Cathedral of Saint Agnes  
29 Quealy Place, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

Monday, April 28, 2025 • 7:00 P.M.

All are invited to attend in person.

This Mass will be broadcast live on the Catholic Faith Network:  
Optimum channel 29/137, Verizon FiOS channel 296  
and Time Warner Cable channel 471.  
Viewers can watch the Mass online at [cfntv.org](http://cfntv.org).

