

# THE PASTOR'S POST

## CONNECTIONS FROM ROME TO WESTBURY

Dear Parish Family:

Greetings from the taxi line at the airport in Rome! It's quite a line....I landed in Rome about two hours ago and so far I can only report that you do a lot of waiting in Italy! I'm here to be part of the celebration of the Ordination to the Diaconate of our beloved "Deacon Nick".



I will only be here for a few days so I do not plan on taking any grand tours but I do have two hopes for visiting during this trip and they both involve St. Francis of Assisi whose feast we will celebrate this Saturday. I am realizing I'm going to have to make some connections with others who are visiting here, the various buses and trains I hope to take, and some deeper ones, too, I pray. Let me explain.

I hope, tomorrow, to go to Assisi. I visited there some 13 or 14 years ago and found great peace there. This is the home of St. Francis of Assisi, one who walked away from great riches and to embrace a life of poverty and simplicity. (It's not as simple as that last sentence may have made it sound!) In his conversion to a new way of life, he inspired so many others to see the presence of God in the poor and in the midst of creation. Good reminders for us these days, no? This month we begin Respect Life Month, a call to honor and respect the dignity of all human beings, especially the poor and the most vulnerable. On October 4, we not only celebrate the Feast of St Francis of Assisi but also conclude the Season of Creation, this time in the Church year when we are called to renew our call to care for this world God has entrusted to us and our moral responsibility to do so.

My second hope is to visit the tomb of Pope

Francis in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. I am so grateful for the presence, the witness, and the quiet strength Pope Leo XVI has brought to the Church in these months.. We are blessed and, I believe, are becoming more aware of the blessings God has given us through him. I am still mourning Pope Francis, if I'm honest. Pope Francis was the pope for most of my priesthood and his pontificate inspired and challenged me to be a better priest and a better disciple. He chose his name as pope because of his love for St. Francis of Assisi. I ask for his help regularly from heaven, particularly in these days of horrendous treatment of so many, particularly our immigrant brothers and sisters and others on the margins. I know I'm not strong enough to do this so I hope, through his intercession, he can inspire each of us to do and to be more to respond to what God is asking of us in these times and moments.

I plan to do this today - I'm finishing this letter early on October 1st - on the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, or St. Therese of the Child Jesus. I am staying in a convent of the Discalced Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus. Today is a big feast for them! To pray with them at Mass this morning (more on this next week) was a great way to begin the day (..and I could pick up more Italian than I thought...there is hope for me!). She once said, "I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens; I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth."



Pope Francis, too, had a special devotion to St. Therese. He has spoken about turning to Saint Thérèse whenever there was something he could not figure out or if it was a certain time and he would ask her to send him a white rose. He said he always received some form a white rose when he





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asked, even when he left the hospital in March. When he died and his body was brought to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major it was greeted by many on the margins, including poor people, homeless, prisoners, migrants and transgender individuals all holding a white rose. (I also believe that he left resources and directions that a white rose be placed on top of his tomb each day. I will investigate this today!)

I hope and pray I can make some more connections and I hope you can, too! It is certainly not the connections made on a quick trip to Rome. It is about the deeper connections and about honestly bearing our share of the Gospel "with the strength that comes from God" (2 Timothy 1:8) so that we might be ever more present to the presence of the living God in our brothers and sisters in big and little ways, even if it begins with "a word, a kindly smile, will often suffice to gladden a wounded and sorrowful heart" (St. Thérèse of Lisieux) so we may be "instruments of peace" (Prayer of St. Francis)!

Please pray for me. I promise the same. Let's pray for Seminarian Nick too!

*Featherman*



Querida familia parroquial:

Saludos desde la fila de taxis del aeropuerto de Roma! Es una fila bastante larga... Aterrécé en Roma hace unas dos horas y, por ahora, solo puedo decir que en Italia se espera mucho. Estoy aquí para participar en la celebración de la ordenación diaconal de nuestro querido «diácono Nick».



Solo estaré aquí unos días, así que no tengo pensado hacer ningún gran recorrido turístico, pero tengo dos deseos para esta visita y ambos tienen que ver con San Francisco de Asís, cuya festividad celebraremos este sábado. Me doy cuenta de que voy a tener que establecer algunas conexiones con otras personas que están de visita aquí, con los distintos autobuses y trenes que espero tomar y, también, con otras más profundas, espero. Me explico.

Espero ir mañana a Asís. Visité ese lugar hace unos 13 o 14 años y encontré allí una gran paz. Es el hogar de San Francisco de Asís, quien renunció a grandes riquezas para abrazar una vida de pobreza y sencillez. (¡No es tan sencillo como puede parecer por la última frase!) En su conversión a una nueva forma de vida, inspiró a muchos otros a ver la presencia de Dios en los pobres y en medio de la creación. Un buen recordatorio para nosotros en estos días, ¿no? Este mes comenzamos el Mes del Respeto a la Vida, un llamamiento a honrar y respetar la dignidad de todos los seres humanos, especialmente los pobres y los más vulnerables. El 4 de octubre no solo celebramos la fiesta de San Francisco de Asís, sino que también concluimos el Tiempo de la Creación, ese momento del año litúrgico en el que se nos llama a renovar nuestro compromiso de cuidar este mundo que Dios nos ha confiado y nuestra responsabilidad moral de hacerlo.

