

## GIVING GOD GLORY ON MY ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

On Tuesday May 18th I will celebrate 37 years of being a priest. With each year and each assignment God has invited me to a new and ever changing relationship with Him. When I was young, it was about making sure the message was proclaimed boldly and with impact. It was humbling to realize God did not measure me by the number of converts I could win over or how often what I said would be remembered or quoted by others. As years passed and places that I have been assigned to expanded, God showed me a more profound path. The greatest conversion that was most needed was to happen within me. I am thrilled to learn more about God and His compassion for us each and every day. What has impacted me so much is experiencing the trust that all of you have in Him. I am humbled to hear of the crosses you carry and still believe and still rely on Him. I am impacted by the struggle you have to forgive and yet you do so because of how God has forgiven you.

Most of all in this last year from being closed to being partially open, I have witnessed your hunger for faith and desire to come back home to God. The obstacles you are overcoming are enormous. There is no greater witness than to see this happen. I feel profoundly blessed to live in this time where such strong faith is lived right before my very eyes.

On this special Anniversary know of my prayers and my gratitude for all you have shown me and taught me about God.

As the journey continues, may it find us in prayer for one another.....



Father John

## GO INTO THE WORLD

I think all of us are waiting to hear those words, "Go into the world." We all want to re-enter the world knowing it is safe, knowing we can do the things we used to do. With the news of COVID-19 numbers decreasing and a chance to regain normalcy occurs, hope flourishes. When Jesus spoke to the disciples and sent them forth with this great commissioning, they were not free of fear, setbacks, and even persecution. As we will be invited back into the world, there will be fear, setbacks, and some questioning. Jesus said great signs will accompany those who are doing the right thing and proclaiming the faith. I believe great things will accompany us as we re-enter the world. We are to acknowledge our faith is strong. We have lived during a pandemic and this has made us stronger. It has helped us simplify, reprioritize and renew ourselves. We are His people. We have survived and now it is time to take this wisdom and proclaim it boldly. The more time families spent around meal tables and did not go out to restaurants, there were new opportunities for listening and understanding one another. That has made us stronger. The more we realized we can manage the pain of the barriers of social distancing, the more we appreciated the opportunity to draw closer when the time was safe. There is a new spiritual power being unearthed in the world and we are the proclaimers of this. We have not been abandoned. We have seen darkness and we have chosen the light and this light brightens as we join together in prayer. We are doing this by coming back to church and being educated through many electronic platforms. Parents helped children learn more about their faith in their homes and this strengthened them. Has this been easy? No. Has this given us setbacks? Yes. But are we in a critical moment in history when we can allow our faith to become a force in our lives? Yes. We need the Lord and the Lord needs us to go forth into the world. This is a new world we are re-entering. We are a new people chosen by God to not just survive at this moment, but to revitalize others by our reliance on Jesus. He will accompany us on our way.

We at St. Anne are preparing for the reopening to full capacity. When that will occur, we are not sure. Yet, we will be ready. The world needs our light, our faith, and our strength so we will be ready. When we go forth, we are never alone. We have the Lord.



Father John Ouper