

A TIME OF PRAYER AND OPENNESS

By now everyone has heard the news that St. Anne is in a time of transition. Last week I heard of my new assignment. As of July 1, I have been appointed the new pastor of St. Daniel the Prophet in Wheaton. I trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit that has brought about all of this. This parish has been my home for the last eight years and it is not easy to leave all of you. The next pastor and shepherd will be a voice I could never be and a leader to places I could never take you. All of this happens because God has this bigger plan. I also trust that St. Daniel the Prophet has some needs that will respond to the leadership style that is uniquely me and that is why I am moving there. All of this takes place for the greater glory of God.

In times of transition, uncertainty can be unsettling. My prayer is that Jesus will calm all of our storms of unknowing. He can and He will, we just have to be patient. In the next weeks with this news of St. Anne now open for a new pastor, it will be the Holy Spirit that will lead and guide the discernment process just as it has for the people of every parish going through these changes.

St. Anne's is an awesome parish. God is about great things here. I thank you for all of your prayers and support over the years; I won't be able to say that enough. I have grown and learned about God through your faith and determination. I have been inspired by your resilience. It has been humbling to walk with you in times of joy and sorrow.

This week I am at the Shamrock Shuffle as the Chaplain for that event. I pray with the Medical Staff and am there for any spiritual needs that come up. It hasn't been run in person on the streets of Chicago since 2019, so there is a lot of excitement for this event. I am praying for the safety of all of the runners and walkers.

May our Lenten journeys find us in prayer for one another.



Fr. John

BURNING BUT NOT BURNT OUT

What captivated Moses was what he saw. He saw something that defied logic, a bush burning in the desert but not burnt out, nor consumed by itself. It drew him in to take a closer look. The challenge for us is to be captivated by the correct things. We have all gone through incredible challenges over the past two years. It is easy to have experienced or still be experiencing COVID fatigue. To push through all we have gone through is amazing. Living spaces became offices and schools. For a while fear challenged our cleaning and air purification efforts. It is easy to look back, but it is more important to look forward. I am amazed at the depth of resilience I saw in the hearts of our faith community. It has been amazing and inspiring.

We are different because we walked through this together. We are different because we did not give up. Meetings on the lawn, a Eucharistic Procession and Holy Hour outside, Zoom meetings and Google Meets all became natural. Live streaming the Celebration of the Eucharist is beyond what I ever could have imagined. The Baptismal Font filled with water from our homes. We adapted because there was no other way. Burning in desire and committed to not burn out.

When Moses came forward to take a closer look, God shared with him a plan. God reminds Moses that He knows the suffering of the people. God knows our suffering. He understands all we have gone through. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob is the God of this present moment. We are to celebrate our resilience. We are to take simple blessings and allow them to speak boldly of His love.

As we enter the third week of Lent we are invited to be amazed at what we see and take what we see and allow it to lead us into deep places. These places are to build our confidence, strengthen our hope and bring us to new life. This week as I look out over the community, I am inspired. On Ash Wednesday it was amazing to see the community back in increasing numbers. The Stations of the Cross brought a new awakening in our community. It is impressive to watch. When I see what I see, I go to my inner room and pray in thanksgiving for all of you.



Fr. John