

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JANUARY 3, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Parents,

Today we celebrate three Astrologers coming from the East to visit Joseph, Mary, but most importantly Jesus. God who fixes and moves the stars led these men to see in a baby child a King. These men were not Israelites but students of the heavens.

This event poses the question: with whom does God communicate? God communicates to anyone who can read signs and then ponder their meaning. On this first week of the new calendar year there are very positive growth signs for the next 365 days. Let me present some signs.

The Youngstown Diocese will have a new leader on January 12th, Bishop David Bonnar. Strong wise leadership is essential for growth. Bishop elect David Bonnar is certainly a sign from God.

COVID threw every one of us for a loop in 2020. But the pathway of our battle against COVID has begun with the vaccinations nearing. With the Lord's help we will have weathered the storm.

St. Joseph School next fall will likely grow above the 200 mark. Indeed, I predict waiting lists in the lower grades since we have a class size limit at 24 with few exceptions.

We will continue to see revitalization on our campus. The Storage Center is now under roof. We see new kitchen facilities for our Fish Fry, parish July Festival, and likely to teach Home Economics to our grade school students. This will mean removing the old Food Shelf building.

The Lord continues to prosper converts to the Catholic Faith especially through the school. Our Principal, Mr. Ike Holzapfel, is a convert and now leads St. Joseph School so positively.

In February 19 of our students will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from our new Bishop. This will take place at the Cathedral in Youngstown. They are now being led by the Spirit as was Jesus after his Baptism in the River Jordan.

The United States will have a new President, President Joseph Biden. His long service in the Senate working across the aisle brings an optimistic sense among our legislators.

These and so many other signs suggest a very positive 2021. Yes, we know there will be rain storms and perhaps thunder and lightning. But even these phenomena water our crops and bring us the awe of God's power. If the Lord can take three Wise Men not even of the Jewish Faith to come to Christ and see the King, how much more can God do with us if we only see and follow the signs.

Thank You for Following the COVID Precautions.

I appreciate all those in the parish who carefully follow the seating arrangements and also when possible wear a mask. Again I remind the parishioners that Communion is given before the Masses on the weekend using the Bishop's approved Rite for Communion in a hospital setting.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
January 3, 2021