

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Signs permeate our life. There are advertising signs, price signs, warning signs, and religious signs. God presents us many signs of his care for us. The Genesis story today tells us of the rainbow sign. This is God's commitment to the earth and the human race.

During this season of Lent, God asks us to pay attention to his signs. Jesus was upset with the Pharisees because of the many signs he gave them, even raising people from the dead; they ignored and did not believe. Hopefully we are not that obtuse to the signs that God gives us today.

One sign that is obvious to me is God's plea for unity in a fractured world. Pope Francis's letter *Fratelli Tutti* pleads for individuals and nations to seek common ground. Our new Bishop uses as his Episcopal Motto "That we all may be one." Congress and the current administration of the United States are taking small steps for a bipartisan approach. May our life of Lent flow toward unity among family and friends.

Lent also encourages us to reach out to others who are poor. The bishop's Appeal that began on Ash Wednesday is a response that we can make. This especially helps people of our area.

We also ought to look wider. It is almost impossible for us to help the entire world except by our prayer. I encourage you to consider the special mission we have chosen in Haiti. We can make an impact in the Diocese of Jeremie as we can make an impact here in the Diocese of Youngstown with the Bishop's Appeal.

The Book of Genesis which we have been reading during the week is a story of God fashioning our earth and universe. **Growth** is the work of God. Scripture notes that Jesus as a young boy **grew** in age, beauty, and wisdom before God and men.

Lent gives us a sign and an opportunity. **Grow!** Let us set a course that will allow us to enter into the Resurrection at Easter with a **growth spurt** prompted by Lent.

Confirmation and First Communion

The Parish will celebrate **Confirmation on the Feast of St. Joseph, Friday, March 19th, at 7:00 pm.** Bishop Bonnar will not be here for the Confirmation. He has delegated all pastors and administrators to administer the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit in his stead. Our Bishop is diligently at work fashioning and developing the vision for his years as our Bishop.

First Communion will take place on March 21st at 2:00 pm. COVID 19 is still with us and therefore the church is only able to seat one full pew per family. This is also true of our Confirmation.

A full pew generally will mean 8 adults and children who are living together. The balcony does not offer us much help. Anyone who has ever been in the balcony knows there are very few seats that give a view of the church and altar below.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
February 21, 2021