

St Ignatius Parish October 29, 2022

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER ARE GONE! Thanks to Fr. Peter Monty, S.J. for assisting Fr. Con for the regular parish ministry through August while I was communing with God and nature in Saskatchewan. Beside having a refreshing Retreat and holiday, I had the opportunity to celebrate Mass with family, relatives, and parishioners at the Lourdes replica shrine in my home parish, St Pete's, where I offered my first Mass in Saskatchewan fifty years ago. About 400 attended and about 80 came to the BBQ my family sponsored at my brother's farm. Thanks to Fr. Joe Newman, S.J. for assisting in the parish for the month of September. Fr. Con Mulvihill, S.J. was supposed to be in Venezuela teaching English to young Jesuits. Unable to obtain a visa, he courageously taught the course from Winnipeg via Zoom.



NEW BEGINNINGS: It is grand to have regular baptisms and weddings again and to restore our regular sacrament of reconciliation times on Friday and Saturday (Friday at 4 - 5 pm and Saturday 10 - 10:45 am). It is even more wonderful to welcome parishioners to *every* daily Mass again! The joy was palpable at the opening school Mass. Present in our beautiful church was the entire school body, 250+ students and teachers and staff! Thanks to the initiative of our Knights, our school, and parishioners, FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS on September 18th was a terrific success. The food and fellowship were tonics to our parish after the two years COVID forced us into isolation from one another. We have begun to replenish our volunteers for Worship ministry in terms of lectors, communion ministers, and ushers. Thanks to the new recruit volunteers! But we still have a way to go.

ED CENTRE: Carmela Castellano Sinclair has been receiving groups back into the Education Centre. The Spiritual Exercises has been meeting regularly. It is heartening to witness the return of the Monday Morning and Tuesday Mothers' Prayer groups again in the Chapel. Fr. Con has told me that there is a healthy number of RCIA candidates this year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Thanks to volunteers, we have a full contingent of classes from the kindergarten through grade 8 classes. These volunteer Sunday School teachers were commissioned on September 11th. At the moment classes tend to be small. Parents may not be aware of this opportunity to help them teach their children the Faith. During the past two years COVID restrictions allowed the parish to assist in preparing children for only three sacraments: First Communion, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation. We all know it is important that young people learn about their faith at all grade levels. At last St Ignatius can assist parents to do that again with Sunday School for all students.

KNIGHTS: We are blessed with a powerful Council of Knights (5808). They enabled us to weather the storm of COVID with their generous work at sanitizing, welcoming, screening. Recently they have pitched in with ushering and collecting offerings. Rebuilding our parish community is their strong focus. It's great to have coffee and donuts again after Sunday morning Masses and the return of the pancake breakfasts. They even have plans afoot for film nights and a Lenten parish retreat.

OPERATIONS MANAGER: Bob Pistawka has had a busy two months. Taking over the supervision of the renovations of the hall/basement in the church in late August, he shepherded the company responsible for the basement renovations to complete them in time for the 'delayed' farewell dinner for Fr. Joe Newman on September 24th. (The Knights sponsored this first 'post flood' event in our hall!) While acquainting himself with our community and our 'full block' of buildings, Bob has focussed on shoring up damaged and missing eaves troughs and spouts (if you raise your eyes on a couple corners of our church you will see evidence of bright copper!) and on pinpointing practical ways to cut costs, namely, conserving heat in our huge church. His first 30 day report to me is replete with details of maintenance activities, including one most evident to you as you enter the vestibule of the church: the return of the statues of St Joseph and St Anthony on the side pillars.

MASKS: I know we are all hoping that the church mask mandate will soon be lifted. Protocols have changed for baptisms, weddings, and funerals. The mandate is now lifted allowing families to choose to wear masks or not. Recent reports of the impending possible onslaught of the new COVID variant and the statistics in Manitoba of COVID infections and even some deaths (in the first week of October) convince me that maintaining the current mask mandate for regular Masses for awhile longer is prudent. We have very many vulnerable persons in our parish!

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: The PPC has worked hard at helping our parish to respond not only to Archbishop's call to act on the mission set out in our own Archdiocesan Synod, but most recently to participate in the Universal Synod of the Church. We had two 'listening sessions' in Lent at St Ignatius and a number of our parishioners participated in the diocesan online questionnaire. Our PPC will soon distribute some of the information gleaned from these sources. There will be an opportunity then for further dialogue and discussion by parishioners.

FINANCE: When I arrived as pastor about eight years ago, in one of my first Reflections of the Pastor, I observed that the parish was unable to continue support of our school into the future. I also noted that we had accrued a debt to the Archdiocese for a backlog of unpaid Sharing God's Gifts and Parish Assessments. By initiating a tuition fee for our school and with your assistance and generosity, in a few years we paid off our debt to the Archdiocese (helped by our second collection at Sunday Masses). Just as COVID struck, our school was poised to operate in "the black". COVID destroyed the 'before and after school' program, the revenues from which significantly contribute to the school budget. While many parishioners found means to keep up weekly donations to the Church, nevertheless our parish revenues diminished significantly as well. Unfortunately now we are at a place where we were eight years ago with respect to our parish debts.

As parishioners begin to return in person in greater numbers and with our school continuing to operate with a full contingent of students, we can hope for recovery. But we do need to be proactive. Our new Operations Manager, Bob Pistawka, and our parish Accountant, Eva Dunlao, are actively assisting in keeping me attentive to the budget. We meet once a month. We are currently creating a Joint Facilities Committee (JFC) with representation from the school and parish. It will be chaired by our Operations Manager. One of its tasks will be to draw up needs/costs in the school and church in the next five year/ten years and then to devise how/when those needs can be met. We are also actively searching for ways of acquiring revenue and controlling costs. As everyone knows there is a cost simply to use and maintain a building, as for example, heating, lighting, cleaning. Just using any of our buildings costs money. Recovering some of those costs is a goal. Figuring out how to do that is a challenge. This is not a new challenge for us, although it always seems new. We have a good solid community with enthusiasm and generosity. I keep on buoying up my spirits with the recognition that in any situation "God will provide." My faith is that God will!

Prayers for all!



R. Frank Albright



St. Ignatius Parish

Please set aside Thursday evening, November 24 for our AGM (Annual General Meeting) of St Ignatius Parish in the parish hall at 7:00 pm

A 5 year old child doing the seemingly impossible?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scGMjNuKgCM>