

Untitled

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of January 17th, 2010
My dear friends in Christ,

"Why Go To Church" I'd like to answer this question with this reflection that highlights the importance of our weekly Church gathering. A Churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to Church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think that I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all." This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today! When you are DOWN to nothing, God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment! And I add, "AMEN!"

Yours in the Lord,

Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of January 10th, 2010

My dear friends in Christ,

This weekend, on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord, we mark the end of the Christmas season in the Church's Liturgical calendar. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who made the Advent/Christmas celebrations so meaningful. The church looked so beautiful. We offer our special words of gratitude to our music groups/Joyful Noise Choir, who spent a lot of time practicing for our liturgies and provided excellent music for our worship. All of our liturgical Ministers: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Ushers/Greeters, and of course, our parish staff have done a wonderful job. We appreciate their faithful and dedicated service. Once again a special word of gratitude to our dear Parishioners for the many cards, gifts, foods, Christmas greetings and the gestures of appreciation you showered upon me this Christmas Season. I truly appreciate your kindness and love. You are in my prayers and Masses. A special word of gratitude to Fr. Salvador Gonzalez, OMI from Willimantic for his lively homily and for initiating us to the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of our Church in the last weekend. Gratefully yours in the Lord,

Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of January 3rd, 2010

Reflection from the Administrator:

My dear friends in Christ,

I hope you all had a wonderful New Year's Day, and I pray that let this year 2010 be a year of blessing to all of us personally, to all the families and to our Parish. Today is a great feast - the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. The Greek word Epiphany (επιφάνεια), which means "appearance" or "manifestation", is applied to Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles in the persons of the Magi. Christ the light has come into our world. His presence dispels the darkness that casts a shroud over our lives. In our world of darkness he is our hope. In the midst of the darkness of war, terrorism, a growing disregard of the dignity of human life, the economic downturn, oppression and violence, Christ has come. While the darkness may seem to overcome this hope, Christ's light is powerful enough to break through the darkest parts of our life experience. Today we add our final figures to our manger scene. The Three Kings, or wise men, have come from the East to worship the Savior. Their presence symbolizes that Jesus came into the world for the salvation of all people. All men and women are called to worship the Christ Child in their lives. May this special day within the Christmas season lift our spirits and bring more hope into our lives. A special word of gratitude to our dear Parishioners for the many cards, gifts, foods and Christmas greetings you showered upon me this Christmas Season. I truly appreciate your kindness and love. You are in my prayers and Masses.

Gratefully yours in the Lord,

Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of December 27th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator:

My dear friends in Christ,

I hope you all had a wonderful family celebration on Christmas Day, and I pray that you will continue to enjoy the wonder of the Lord's Birth throughout this holy season. This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. It is a marvelous feast to reflect upon the wonder of the Incarnation. God, the all-powerful Creator of the Universe, willed to be born of a woman in Jesus Christ and be nurtured in the life of a family. When we gaze at the Christ child in the manger, we see human life made holy by the Divine. As we take a baby in our arms and cradle its innocence and beauty, we can know that God allowed himself to be embraced by human hands and arms. Our trusting and loving God is truly among us. I pray that your family be blessed and strengthened in this beautiful year 2010 when we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of our Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of December 20th, 2009

Untitled

My dear friends,

This is the last Sunday of Advent and we are all busy with preparation for Christmas. There is so much to do, isn't there? I was reading an Advent reflection the other day from the booklet, The Word Among Us. It contained some insightful thoughts about this hectic time. It stated that giving gifts can sometimes be more of a job than an act of love. With this tight economy it can also be a source of tension and anxiety. There are family obligations and increased work at our jobs. The reflection suggests that instead of thinking about how much we should give and how much we have to do, we might focus on how much Jesus wants to give to us. This may not be the way we are used to looking at Christmas, but Advent should be a time when God gives us a taste of the joy that is coming to us at Christmas, and the joy that awaits us in heaven. No, God may not make us materially rich, but He will give us the joy and peace of his Spirit. He doesn't pay our bills, but he wants to relieve our anxiety so that we may hear his voice and receive his guidance. All we have to do is come to him. Do you want to give the best gifts this Christmas? Start by receiving Jesus. When we are open to his peace and love, we become free to give the greatest of gifts - our time, our attention and our love.

Sincerely in Christ,
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of December 13th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator:

My dear friends,

The third Sunday of Advent is referred to as Gaudete Sunday, which coming from the Latin means "Rejoice"! On this Sunday, the rose candle is lit. Christians are encouraged to rejoice as the birth of Christ is near. Rose vestments are worn on this day replacing the purple. The theme of the liturgy of this Third Sunday of Advent which is also reflected in the readings is one of "Joyful Anticipation."

The Season of Advent is a beautiful time of the year, not only because of its theme of "Expectation," but because of what this season points to: Jesus Christ. Let us use this Advent Season this year, for raising our hands, not for the purpose of blaming or accusing; let us raise our hands during this Holy Season of Advent in prayer with hopeful expectation in what God has planned for each of us and for our parish as we are going to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Dedication of our Church - 2010.

May your experience of the Advent Season this year strengthen your relationship with Christ and deepen your love of your neighbors.

Sincerely in Christ,
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of November 29th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator

My dear friends in Christ,

Did you know that, on average, we spend five years of our life waiting in line, two years playing phone tag with people, and six months sitting at red lights? That is more than seven and a half years of waiting, at best doing nothing, or at worst being aggravated to a great extent. We are all waiting for something and in the ADVENT SEASON we find out a purpose to our waiting. We think we have it rough with all our waiting, how about having to wait a thousand years for an eternal king to come to end the oppression of the world? That's what the ancient Hebrew patriarchs, kings, prophets, priests and people experienced. In generation after generation they prayed fervently and hoped for the arrival of the Messiah. In the Advent season we symbolically participate in the waiting of our Hebrew ancestors. Through our prayer, liturgy, Eucharist, and all the signs and symbols of Advent, we wait for the day of the Lord. Now our waiting has been sanctified. As we wait in line during these days before Christmas, maybe we should remember the waiting of those expecting the Messiah, and wait with patience, humility, and with expectant hope as we pray for the coming of our God into our midst. Have a good and holy ADVENT!

Yours in Christ.
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of October 25th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator:

As I have already mentioned in the last weekend Masses, I will be leaving for India on Monday, October 26, to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of my Ordination along with my parents and family at my home parish in Kerala and in the Mission Diocese. I feel privileged to celebrate 25 years of my Priesthood during this Year of the Priest. I assure my prayers to each of the families of St. Catherine of Siena, Preston, in my Jubilee Masses on November 1st and 8th respectively. I will return on Friday, November 20th and please do pray for my safe trip.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of October 18th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator:

Thank you so much for your valuable presence, prayers, greeting cards and gifts on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of my Ordination. I deeply appreciate everyone in the parish and grateful for your love, friendship, support and prayers. God Bless You.

It's autumn and it's the month of Mary our Mother, dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary. Let us pray the Rosary asking for Mary's intercession to her Son, Jesus.

With gratitude,
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of October 11th, 2009

Untitled

Reflection from the Administrator:

As I had mentioned in the last weekend, Bishop Cote has directed the Office of Pastoral Planning, under the direction of Sister Elissa Rinere, C.P., to begin a process of study and discussion in the Norwich deanery. If we are to have a successful result from these efforts, it is essential that you, the leader of the parish communities, participate in the process. Details of the meetings were given in the last bulletin.

I earnestly encourage your most thoughtful and most dedicated parishioners to attend this Deanery Meeting either at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish on October 13th or at St. Patrick Cathedral on October 14th from 7.00 P.M. to 9.00 P.M. respectively. It is very important for your Church at Preston. Let the voice of Preston be heard in the meeting. Thank you.
With every best wishes, Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, the weekend of October 4th, 2009

Reflection from the Administrator:

After my sharing with you last weekend with regard to the year of the construction of our Church at Preston, I talked to a few Priests in the Diocese and the information I gathered from our parish website is that the Church was built in the year 1959 but Blessing and Dedication of this beautiful Church of St. Catherine of Siena was held on the 24th of April 1960. So we have time to plan and organize to get everybody together for a Golden Jubilee Celebration of our Church sometime in the year 2010. In the meantime, if you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to share with me either by emailing me fatherjoe.stc@sbcglobal.net or meeting with me at anytime by appointment. I fully believe that it is an occasion for us to come together to revive and renew our faith in Jesus Christ through our local Church at Preston. Please remember, this is your church, let us unite in our thoughts and efforts to make this Golden Jubilee a meaningful celebration that we will cherish and be proud of in the years to come.

Father Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, weekend of September 27th, 2009

"Have you ever seen a saint praying?" St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Teresa of Avila have their own stories about the influence their fathers had on their lives as role models. The Little Flower used to ask her first grader classmates an innocent question: "Have you ever seen a saint praying?" She would add: "If you haven't, come to my house in the evening. You will see my dad on his knees in his room with out-stretched arms, praying for us, his children, every day." She states in one of her letters from the convent: "I have never seen or heard or experienced anything displeasing to Jesus, in my family." St. Teresa of Avila was admitted against her will, by her father, to a boarding house conducted by nuns, in the final year of her high school studies, as soon as he detected bad books and yellow magazines, hidden in her box. They were supplied by her spoiled friend and classmate, Beatrice. St. Teresa later wrote as the Mother Superior: "But for that daring and timely action of my father, I would have ended up in the streets, as a notorious woman." Today's gospel reminds us of our responsibility to give good example and show tolerance to others instead of causing scandal.

From the Sunday Bulletin, weekend of September 20th, 2009

My Dear Friends in Christ,

A Nationwide Pro-Life Program

"40 DAYS FOR LIFE" will begin on September 23, 2009 and run through November 1, 2009. There will be a "40 Days for Life" Vigil Mass at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at St. Patrick Cathedral in Norwich. This will be the third year that our Diocese has participated in this prayerful and informative program. This initiative has been undertaken by individuals and local Pro-Life organizations throughout the United States and Canada to unite to end abortion. The major strength of the campaign is its simplicity. There are three key components:

- Prayer and Fasting
- Peaceful Vigil
- Community Outreach

Bishop Cote is encouraging each parish and pro-life representative to adopt a day and involve their parish in this initiative. This positive effort can raise the level of awareness for the sanctity of human life.

Please join the nation from Sept. 23rd - Nov. 1st by praying each day at noon. The following prayer is suggested: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the lives of the unborn children who are in danger of abortion."

There is a special baby waiting for your prayers. Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,
Fr. Joe

From the Sunday Bulletin, weekend of September 13th, 2009

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you so much for your warm welcome and the support you have shown me in the last week. I am honored to be here with you at

St. Catherine of Siena Church.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to Rev. George J. Richards for his tireless and marvelous leadership in the past long nine years. Of course, all of you miss him. He has contributed a lot to keep up the faith of this community. Now God calls me to be here to keep up that administrative leadership and spirituality, and continue that journey of faith with you.

My heart and door is always open to you - this is not my Parish but "it is our Parish". Let us get to know one another, to worship together, to love, serve and follow our spiritual pathway to Jesus, our Lord and Savior. God bless you.

Sincerely,
Fr. Joe