

October 18, 2020

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time/World Mission Sunday



## 29<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

"Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." - Mt 22:21

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD

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# ONE

IN

# CHRIS

Annunciation  
Sacred Heart  
St. Francis Xavier  
St. Stephen

## AREA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

### Annunciation

9965 Mayhew Lake Road NE • Sauk Rapids, MN 56379  
320-252-1729 • oneinchristacc.org

### Sacred Heart

2875 10th Avenue NE • Sauk Rapids, MN 56379  
320-251-8115 • sacredheartsaukrapids.org

### St. Francis Xavier

219 2nd Street N, PO Box 150 • Sartell, MN 56377  
320-252-1363 • stfrancissartell.org

### St. Stephen

103 Central Avenue S • St. Stephen, MN 56375  
320-251-1520 • churchofststephen.org

### MASS TIMES

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Oct 19</b>	8 am	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	Word & Communion
		8:30 am	<b>Annunciation</b>	† Bev Dobis
<i>Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues</i>				
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Oct 20</b>	8 am	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	Kevin & Jane Rennie Anniversary
		5:30 pm	<b>St. Stephen</b>	† Melvin & Nicole Becker
<i>St. Paul of the Cross</i>				
		5:30 pm	<b>*Sacred Heart</b>	† Dorothy Schulte
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Oct 21</b>	8 am	<b>*Sacred Heart</b>	Special Intentions of
<i>Weekday</i>				
		8 am	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	† Mary Jo Bozych
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Oct 22</b>	8 am	<b>St. Stephen</b>	† Mark Wellner
<i>St. John Paul II</i>				
		8 am	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	† Sharon Heim
		8:30 am	<b>Annunciation</b>	† Eleanor Brambrink
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Oct 23</b>	8 am	<b>*Sacred Heart</b>	† Patricia Soyka
<i>St. John of Capistrano</i>				
		8:30 am	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	† Harold Grundman
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Oct 24</b>	5 pm	<b>*Sacred Heart</b>	For the People of the Parishes
<i>St. Anthony Mary Claret</i>				
		5 pm	<b>St. Francis Xavier</b>	For the People of the Parishes
		7 pm	<b>St. Stephen</b>	† Betty, Frank & Leo Mesinger
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Oct 25</b>	8:30 am	<b>Annunciation</b>	† Raymond & Virginia Brand
<i>30th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>				
		9 am	<b>*Sacred Heart</b>	† Nick Prom
		9:30 am	<b>*St. Francis Xavier</b>	† Donald Kuklok
		10:30 am	<b>St. Stephen</b>	† Eddie Rudolph

### PASTORAL SERVICES

#### Reconciliation

**Saturdays** 3:30 pm Sacred Heart  
4 pm St. Francis Xavier  
8 pm St. Stephen  
**Sunday** 7:50 am Annunciation

#### Anointing of the Sick Home Bound Communion Pastoral Visitation, Prayer Requests, Marriage and Baptism Preparation

If you have any of the above pastoral needs, please contact your Parish Office.

Viewers in the St. Cloud Diocese can watch the Mass on KSTC-45 at 11 am each Sunday via cable, satellite or antenna (check your cable provider for channel number). Charter Communication airs the Mass on Channel 17.

#### Tuesday & Thursday Masses at SFX

Fr. Tim Baltes has graciously accepted an invitation to say Mass on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:00 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier as he is able. Please **carefully** watch the bulletin Mass schedule each week to confirm. Thank you, Fr. Tim!

#### \*Livestreamed Masses

Bulletin announcements are due in the parish office by noon on Mondays. Thank you! Please contact your Parish Office for more information.



*"But you promised!"* Have you ever heard that phrase from a son or a daughter? How many times has one promise been broken to keep another? How many times have you had to break one commitment to keep another?

Sometimes what we should do fades against what we *have* to do. The ideal falls to the real. When others criticize us for failing to uphold the ideal, they force us to face our values and make hard choices. Jesus' enemies tried to force him into making a choice between the ideal and the real. His answer turned the table on their question. It forced them to make a choice of priorities.

In today's Gospel, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus into making a distinction between what was required under Roman law and what God calls us to do. Unfortunately, even today we are faced with civil laws that come in conflict with what the Church teaches. As Christians, we are often challenged by how we are called to uphold our local laws while also upholding God's laws.

We are seeing this play out currently as our country seeks to fill the open seat on our Supreme Court. The current nominee is a devoted Catholic who aligns closely with Church teachings. Some of these teachings are in conflict with federal laws. This nominee is being challenged as to how she will reconcile her faith with the current laws.

Today's Gospel (Matthew 22: 25-21) is often cited as an indication for the need for a separation of church and state. However, as Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees, it is apparent that at times, this separation is not as easy as one would like. At times, we are forced to make a choice between the ideal and the real.

The clash between religious separation and cultural accommodation came from a simple coin and the duty to pay a tax. The symbols of each weighed heavy on the hearts of Jesus' contemporaries. Yet, in their political struggles they forgot God's reason for social engagement and the government of the people, who are to benefit from the common good.

In these passages, Jesus gave us the freedom to act in the public arena. But, with that freedom came a responsibility. God calls us to act for the good of all. Let us pray that we follow God's call to act for common good.

Blessings,  
**Deacon Steve**

DAILY READINGS

- Monday:** Eph 2:1-10/Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 4ab, 4c-5 [3b]/Lk 12:13-21
- Tuesday:** Eph 2:12-22/Ps 85:9ab-10, 11-12, 13-14 [cf. 9]/Lk 12:35-38
- Wednesday:** Eph 3:2-12/Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 [cf. 3]/Lk 12:39-48
- Thursday:** Eph 3:14-21/Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 11-12, 18-19 [5b]/Lk 12:49-53
- Friday:** Eph 4:1-6/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 [cf. 6]/Lk 12:54-59
- Saturday:** Eph 4:7-16/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5 [1]/Lk 13:1-9
- Sunday:** Ex 22:20-26/Ps 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51 [2]/1 Thes 1:5c-10/Mt 22:34-40



LEADERSHIP



**ACC Pastoral Leadership**

- Pastor** **Fr. Tom Knoblach**  
320-251-8115, Ext. 112  
pastor@sacredheartsaukrapids.org
- Pastor** **Fr. Ron Weyrens**  
320-252-1363, Ext.1101 (days)  
Ext. 1102 (night/weekends)  
rweyrens@stfrancissartell.org
- Sacramental Minister** **Fr. Doug Liebsch**  
dougliebsch@gmail.com
- Deacon** **Joe Kresky**  
320-251-8115  
jkresky@sacredheartsaukrapids.org
- Deacon** **Terry Jancik**  
320-251-8115  
tjancik@sacredheartsaukrapids.org
- Deacon** **Steve Pareja**  
320-761-2503
- Pastoral Associate** **Deb Rudolph**  
320-252-1363, Ext. 1103  
drudolph@stfrancissartell.org

~Come together to pray a socially  
distanced

Living Rosary for the end of COVID-19~  
Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm  
Sacred Heart Church, Sauk Rapids



**What is a living rosary?** A living rosary is when people are used to represent the beads of the rosary. Each person or family leads one prayer of the rosary (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be) and candles are lit as the prayers are said. If you have never experienced the living rosary, this will be a great opportunity to join others in the One in Christ Area Catholic Community in praying for a cause that is on all our hearts.

Please visit [www.oneinchristacc.org](http://www.oneinchristacc.org) for more information or to sign up to lead one of the prayers. Prayer text will be provided for those who might be nervous.

If you would prefer to just come and join in the prayer in the pews, that's great, too!



Please remember to continue to pray for all those affected by illness, their caregivers and public officials working to keep us safe. **Please pray** • for Pope Francis, all Bishops, priests, deacons and religious • for legal protection for unborn children \* for a friend with long term illness • for an end to COVID-19 • for the leaders of our country and the world • for all pregnant women • for all those with long term illness • for those mourning the loss of a loved one • for an end to violence • for those suffering from the wildfires • for my parents in heaven • for all Parish Prayer Line requests and those who have recently received prayer blankets.

**Please visit your Parish website for those in your Parish needing prayers.**

BAPTISMS



We welcome the following children, Baptized into our parish family and the Christian community:

**Zoey Ann Popp**, daughter of Cory & Kristi, baptized at St. Francis Xavier

**Marilyn Sue Welsh**, daughter of Ryan & Rebecca, baptized at Sacred Heart.

MARRIAGE BLESSINGS

Congratulations and many blessings to Alex Schueller & Sarah Roehl who were married on October 10 at Sacred Heart.



**Red Cross Blood Drive @ SFX:**

Sign up to donate blood on Tuesday, November 10 in the Gathering Place at St. Francis Xavier Church. To make an

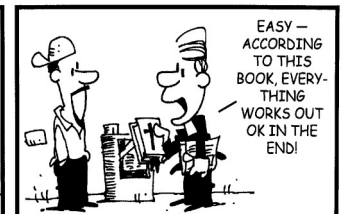
appointment or for more info, call or email Greg at 320-250-9137 or [schlossergregory@gmail.com](mailto:schlossergregory@gmail.com).

**Angels and Demons: What do Scripture and Tradition Say about Them?**

Movies and the Internet show no shortage of information on angels and demons. Bookstores have whole racks devoted to the topic. While much of what we see and read keeps us entertained, the media's presentation of the spiritual and diabolical worlds is all too often unconnected to the Christian message. In this presentation and in light of Christ's absolute victory over sin and death, Fr. Michael Patella will outline the Christian understanding of the devil, angels, demons, ghosts, and spirits in Scripture and Tradition. He will also discuss the inherent problems and dangers that arise today with the undue attention many give to the occult.

**Thursday, October 22, Webinar presentation from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Event is Free. Registration is required (register at least five days in advance of the event); please visit [www.collegevilleMN.com/theologyday](http://www.collegevilleMN.com/theologyday), call 320-363-3560, or email [theologyday@csbsju.edu](mailto:theologyday@csbsju.edu) to register.**

29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



## ANNUNCIATION PARISH

**Contact:** Cindy Gans 320-252-1729  
annunciation@cloudnet.com  
Faith Formation: Shirley Scapanski  
320-259-4941 • thekids@cloudnet.com

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Income for	Sunday, October 11th
Adult Sunday .....	\$1,825.00
Visitor .....	\$4.00
Youth .....	\$2.25
Votive Candles.....	\$7.00
World Mission .....	\$40.00
Building Fund .....	\$170.00
Wedding Stole Fee Church.....	\$100.00
Total Income .....	\$2,148.25

\*Weekly Income needed to meet yearly budget \$3,037.00

## SUNDAY 8:30 AM MASS

**Lectors:** JoAnn Marshall and Lora Knafla  
**Eucharist:** Lori Popp  
**Ushers:** Tim, Renee, Justin and Trista Thell

**Happy Birthday:** John Ferche,  
Matthew Kahl, Linda Molitor, Luella Cave,  
Brayden Melby, Rylan Robinson, Cash Sperling,  
Bruce Crosby, Rylan Brand, Ann Scheel.



## FUTURE EVENTS

Mon. Oct. 26th 1:30-7pm Blood Mobile Shepherd of  
the Pines. Apt. only

## Other News

**Thank You** to everyone who prepared, participated and purchased items at the Auction on Oct. 4th. It was a great success and Thank you to John Bemboom for being our auctioneer for the day. Everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated. The income total for the auction \$2,230.50.

Also:

Thank you to our **Prayer Line** of 38 dedicated parishioners. We want to express our gratitude for sharing your God given gifts in love of God & neighbor.

**Q:** What do I do to submit a prayer request to the Prayer Line?

**A:** Call either Maureen Athman (320)252-7650 or Lucy Palmer (320) 393-2538. All requests are welcomed & treated respectfully & confidentially.

**Needed** someone to clean church weekly and the hall monthly (2X a month during rel. ed). **This is a paid position, with flexible hours** and averages between 2-4 hours per week. Please call the parish office if you are interested.

Also: We are in need of a person to do misc. maintenance when needed. This is a non-paid position.

October 18, 2020

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## ST. STEPHEN PARISH

**Contact:** Carol Hellmann  
320-251-1520  
ststephenchurchoffice@gmail.com  
Office hours 2-6 pm  
Faith Formation: Danna Gasperlin  
320-251-5066 • ststephenfaith@gmail.com

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

### Income for October 10 & 11, 2020

Contributions ..... \$1,414.00

### Parish Mission

The final countdown is on! Our parish mission begins next Sunday night, October 25. We have been planning, preparing, and praying that God would bless these four days in a mighty way. Come with faith-expecting God to bring you into a new place with Him. There is no doubt that it will be a special time for everyone in our community. A time of inner healing and outer transformation. See you there.

### 150th Anniversary

The next meeting for the 150th Anniversary will be October 20th at 6:15 in the parish hall

## FAITH FORMATION

### Faith Formation Classes

October 21: Grades 1-4 and Confirmation

### Faith Formation Teacher Needed

We are looking for a teacher, or co-teachers, to teach our 8th graders this coming year. Please contact Danna at 320-251-5066.

### Parish Council Seeking Candidates

Three current members will have terms expiring in December. The Council acts as an advisory board and meets every two months. Terms are for three years. If interested in 'getting on board' and becoming a candidate, or if you wish to nominate someone, please call Betty Pogatshnik, at 252-6009 by November 17. All nominees will be contacted. Those in acceptance will have their names entered in the election process.

### Memory Book

Do you have old photos, recipes or articles of events happening at St. Stephen Church? We would love to include them in the Memory Book being put together for the 150th Anniversary. Call Carol Hlebain 320-746-8755 if you have pictures or recipes to submit or call Anita Smoley 320-252-0473 if you have pictures on a disk. You may also drop items off at the parish office. Make sure you have your name and phone number on all items so they can be returned to you. The last day to submit items for the Memory Book is November 15.

**Contact:** JoAnn Mo  
 320-251-8115, ext. 114  
 jmo@sacredheartsaukrapids.org  
**Faith Formation:** Jen Haman  
 320-251-8115, ext. 117  
 jhaman@sacredheartsaukrapids.org

**ALL Masses at Sacred Heart are livestreamed.**  
 Go to [www.sacredheartsaukrapids.org](http://www.sacredheartsaukrapids.org) and click on **LIVESTREAM**

### Office Hours:

Monday – Closed  
 Tuesday – 12-4pm; Thursday 8am-4pm  
 Wednesday and Friday – 8:30am-4pm

## ALL SOULS MASS

We will remember those of our parish community who have died over the past year in an All Souls Remembrance Mass at 6:30pm, Monday, November 2. Please join us as we remember family and friends “who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.” If you have any questions about this liturgy, contact Jill in the office at 320-251-8115 x122.



## SKD SAINTS IN SERVICE



**St. Katharine Drexel School**

This year’s Saints in Service event will take place on Saturday, October 24. This event helps to serve members in our community

by helping those who are unable to complete the task of raking due to physical limitations. If you know an elderly or disabled person who would like a work team to come rake their yard, please call the school office at 251-2376.

## COAT DRIVE

The KC Council 5548 is again sponsoring a “Coat Drive” for the community. There is a box available in the Gathering Space for your donations. Also needed are boots, gloves, caps and scarves. Please have the coats clean and in good repair.



Also, if anyone is in need of a coat or other winter attire, please contact 320-492-7993 or 320-252-0126.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 18; 6:30pm—Thomas Aquinas Study Group
- October 19; 7pm—KC’s Meeting
- October 20; 6:30pm—Pastoral Council Meeting
- October 21; 5:45pm—Foundation
- October 21; 7:30pm—Wednesday Night Live
- October 24; 1:30pm—Day of Service
- October 25; 7pm—Living Rosary

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

### Income for week ending October 11, 2020

Adult Collection.....	\$18,340.63
Children’s Offering.....	\$14.00
Friends in Need .....	\$12.27
Improvements .....	\$215.27
World Mission Sunday .....	\$401.00
Mission Co-op (Crosiers) .....	\$427.00
Weekly adult collection needed to meet yearly budget	\$16,346

## LIVING ROSARY

Come together to pray a socially distanced **Living Rosary for the end of COVID-19** on Sunday, October 25 at 7pm at Sacred Heart Church. Please visit [www.oneinchristacc.org](http://www.oneinchristacc.org) for more information or to sign up to lead one of the prayers.



## LEAF RAKING SERVICE EVENT



Join us on October 24, 1:30pm at Sacred Heart Church as we head out in groups for a couple hours of fresh air, community building and service in support of those who need their leaves raked and other small yard clean up tasks. Text or call Deacon Joe (320-200-4454) or Philip (320-281-9518) to sign-up for this meaningful event.

## TRUNK OR TREAT

Trunk or Treat is on for this October 31st with a few changes! Come to the Sacred Heart Parking lot from **6 pm-7:30 pm** on the 31st with your costume (including your mask!) and visit our decorated trunks! Hot cider and cocoa will be available as well. If you would like to decorate your trunk, contact Philip - 320-281-9518.



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

Youth group for 9-12th and 6-8th grade will meet on separate nights through the Fall  
 9-12th Grade - 7:30-9:00pm - 1st and 3rd Wednesdays;  
 Oct 21, Nov 4, Nov 18, Dec 2, Dec 16  
 6-8th Grade - 6:30-8:00pm - 2nd Wednesdays; Oct 14, Nov 11, Dec 9  
 Hope to see you there! Contact Philip for more info at 320-281-9518.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

If you know of anyone who needs our prayers and wants to be put on the following prayer list, please contact 320-251-8115. Gary Chaika, Dan Henry, Sandi Hinkemeyer, Linda Midas, Michael Reinert, Pam Smoley, lone and Jerry Torborg, Norma Vouk and Grace Wolter.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Weekly Collection Budget ..... \$19,230.77  
 Collected 10/11/2020.....\$15,798.00  
**Excess (Deficit) ..... \$(3,432.77)**

YTD Collection Budget ..... \$288,461.54  
 YTD Collected ..... \$273,623.56  
**Excess (Deficit) .....\$(14,837.98)**

SFX SCHOOL NEWS

Greetings from SFX School~

This month's Fruit of the Spirit focus at SFX is self-control. *"For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control."* 2 Timothy 1:7 May the power of love flow through in our thoughts, words and actions.

On Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, our school prayed the world mission rosary together. A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a rosary traveled from one classroom to another. Each classroom prayed a part of the rosary and reflected on our world and its needs.

The SFX **Saints in Service Work-a-Thon** is Saturday, October 24, 2020. Staff, students, and parents of St. Francis Xavier Catholic School will volunteer their time and talent to assist senior residents, families in need and those with disabilities in the Sartell community. Volunteers will rake leaves, clear gardens, pickup garbage, sweep sidewalks, stack firewood, or do other small jobs for people who need the extra help for free. Donations can be made to the school in support of the work-a-thon. Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Blessings  
 Bonnie Van Heel, Principal

PARISH STAFF

**Business Manager** Adam Vonderahe  
 320-252-1363, Ext. 1105  
 avonderahe@stfrancissartell.org

**Parish Secretary** Becky Dingmann  
 320-2521363, Ext. 1100  
 bdingmann @stfrancissartell.org

**Office Assistant** Jane Rennie  
 320-252-1363, Ext. 1106  
 jrennie@stfrancissartell.org

SFX SCHOOL

**Principal** Bonnie Van Heel  
 320-252-8761, Ext. 1302  
 bvanheel@sfx61.org

**School Secretary** Deb Bearson  
 320-252-8761  
 dbearson@sfx61.org

St. Francis Xavier Cemetery

The water supply has been turned off in the cemetery. As we prepare for winter, we ask that you please clear items off of gravesites and remove pots from plant stands. All items must be removed from the cemetery by **November 1st** so that nothing ends up getting buried under the snow. Winter burials require snow blowing and hidden objects can damage equipment and be dangerous to workers. Any items left after November 1<sup>st</sup> will be removed by cemetery personnel and may be discarded. **Please note, it is suggested but not required that plant stands be removed.** Thank you.

Coats for Kids

The Coats for Kids donation box is in the Gathering Place awaiting your donation of winter coats, hats, gloves, etc. which will be distributed to families in need. Donated items should be clean and in good condition (new or gently used). Adult coats may also be donated. If you or someone you know is in need of winter coats or other attire, please call Tom or Ione Jacobs at 320-492-7993 (cell) or 320-252-0126 (home). For more information on the program, please visit the website at: <https://www.coats-for-kids.org/>

2020 Franny Fest Results

Income:  
 Cash Raffle Prizes \$ 9,225.00  
 Raffle Ticket Sales \$30,631.00  
 Silent Auction Sales \$ 9,152.00  
 Franny Flyer Virtual Race \$55.00  
 Household Donations \$22,704.00  
 Quilt Raffle Sales \$ 1,908.00  
**Total Income \$73,675.00**

Expenses:  
 Raffle Prize Payout \$9,225.00  
 Raffle Ticket Printing and Permit \$2,028.05  
 Silent Auction Expense \$ 250.00  
 Advertising \$ 1,276.21  
 Miscellaneous Expense \$ 508.99  
**Total Expense \$13,288.25**

**Net Profit \$60,386.75**

Thank you to those who made additional household donations this year, helping to realize a net profit that nearly matched our profit from last year's festival. Thanks to all who participated and donated in any way of your time, talents and treasure. God bless you!

## Pope Video

Visit the link [thepopevideo.org](http://thepopevideo.org) for the October 2020 Pope video. Translation: *No one has been baptized a priest or a bishop. We have all been baptized as lay people. Lay people are protagonists of the Church. Today, it is especially necessary to create broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church. And we must emphasize the feminine lay presence because women tend to be left aside. We must promote the integration of women, especially where important decisions are made. We pray that by the virtue of baptism, the laity, especially women, may participate more in areas of responsibility in the Church, without falling into forms of clericalism that diminish the lay charism.*



“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;” Listen with your spouse for God’s message of love by exploring a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME)** weekend. The next weekends are: Nov 13-15, 2020 in Virtual Weekend, MN and Feb 12-14, 2021 in Buffalo, MN. Early sign up is recommended. For more information visit our website at: [northmnwwme.org](http://northmnwwme.org) or contact us at [applications@northmnwwme.org](mailto:applications@northmnwwme.org) or 888-455-3496.



## PASTORAL MINISTRY

### Be With Us Lord



Here we are mid-October 2020. Who among us could have imagined the previous nine months?! We began a new year with great expectations as a nation and a people of God. Perhaps we even made some New Year’s resolutions to become more active, to reach out more often to help others, or to pray for all the issues in our world that need attention. Little did anyone know that come March our schools, our shopping malls, our airports and even our churches would be closed – off limits, as we found ourselves amidst a world-wide pandemic. Add to that the racial unrest, the political climate, the blatant prejudice, and bias proclaimed by many – all in search of justice while we long for peace and a world renewed. Many have said the end of 2020 cannot come soon enough!

So now, with face masks in place, dredged in sanitizer we go about our days knowing the pandemic has claimed over one million lives worldwide. Who could have known? And who, we wonder, has any answers for our future. We as a people have experienced being “locked down” in our homes, away from work, away from school and friends and even family. So, what have we learned? What might God intend we learn?

I have myself wondered if the world we live in had become so out of control that God might have pushed the “reset” button. We were a people on the go – 24-7. Our schedules were filled to the max, then within a few short weeks, we were confined to our homes. The time we spent with nowhere to go for weeks on end was for some an opportunity to spend time with one another again, to sit at table with our children, to work together on homework and/or home projects, to share household chores and maybe to play a game of cards or a board game that was held up in the closet for years. Then, not being allowed in our churches, we gathered as a family and watched a live-stream Mass – we prayed together in our homes. Perhaps we discussed the proclaimed Scripture or Father’s homily with one another. Even amidst the chaos, we were able to join one another in prayer.

We might ask ourselves: So, have we learned anything God? What do you want us to take from this experience? And when God, will this be over? The reality is the pandemic continues, justice will be forever sought, and our national election will take place and life will go on. We will live our lives never really knowing when this might all be over. To be sure, when the pandemic subsides, our normal will be new, for we are forever changed by what we have experienced together.

Let us ask God to continue to make his presence known in our world. May he witness in his people a renewed commitment to love one another, friend, family, stranger, and foe. And help us God to turn our hearts and our whole being to you, the true model of love, mercy, forgiveness, and hope. Be with us Lord, we pray, be with us.

With hope,  
**Deb Rudolph**