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December 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish,

The year started with so much hope and promise. 2020 was the 100th Anniversary of our parish. It was promising to be a year like no other. The pastoral theme was “**Celebrating the Gift of our Sacred Journey.**” We started the year by recognizing that we began as a parish and grew for 100 years on Treaty 8 Territory. But it was mid-March that our Sacred Journey took a drastic turn. Public Mass was cancelled. In the blink of an eye, we were in the midst of a pandemic. Our Parish Mission was cancelled. The 100th Anniversary Dinner was cancelled. The Mass in the park was cancelled. All of the 100th Anniversary events were cancelled. A year like no other and we were supposed to celebrate the gift of our sacred journey.

We did celebrate, but not in the ways we had planned or expected.

We celebrated our resilience. On March 17, 2020 when all public Masses were canceled we showed that a pandemic was not going to stop our spiritual lives. With the help of so many the church remained open as a place of prayer. In the spring we could not celebrate Confirmation over two evenings as we ordinarily do. Instead, we celebrated Confirmation in the fall over seven evenings. We had no Easter Vigil in April, instead we celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation over four evenings in the fall. We are again celebrating baptisms. For now, much more simple and only one family at a time. We learned how to increase our on-line presence. Thank you for your resilience and willingness to adapt.

We celebrated our cooperation. When Mass started again in June the entire parish staff adapted to new ways of serving the parish. I am thankful for the parish staff who responded to so many new needs to ensure that we were all safe at Mass. I was always impressed (and remain impressed) how everyone is so cooperative at the end of Mass and patiently waits until you are instructed by the usher that you can leave the pew. Thank you for your cooperation.

We celebrated our common commitment to our parish. You kept supporting the parish financially and for that we are so thankful. Without doubt our donations have dropped but a key focus for us as we maneuver this pandemic is to minimize our costs. We did not purchase Sunday Missals this year and our hymnal order for 2021 is minimal, only enough to maintain our license. As we moved the bulletin online, this has decreased printing and paper expenses for us. We decided this was not the year to paint the lines in the parking lot and we are managing our snow removal as economically as we can. We have reduced our office hours, thus decreasing our staffing costs and redeployed staff to where they are needed most, like our on-line presence. Each extra expense we incur is thoughtfully considered, weighing options before we commit.

Our sacred journey has taken us on this road, a road that we would never have imagined. I am more keenly aware that we have much in common with the Holy Family. They too remained committed on their sacred journey as they too were lead in ways they would never have imagined. The first Christmas was very simple. Our sacred journey has brought us to a simple Christmas as well. Like the Holy Family, we too will embrace “**Celebrating the Gift of our Sacred Journey.**”

Blessings and Merry Christmas,

Fr. Remi,
on behalf of the Redemptorist Community and the parish staff