



Corpus Christi Parish

"Building the Body of Christ"

Special Report From Fr Don

- Personal Message
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September 20, 2018

My brothers and sisters,

Recently I was showing an out of town visitor all the work being done in downtown Detroit. She was in the real estate business, and I was eager to get her reaction. Her simple words to describe downtown were "under construction!" If I were to suggest a similar description of our faith community, it would be "rapid growth and development".

After years of merging parishes and closing schools, we are experiencing so many blessings:

- our buildings are in good shape,
- we are financially sound,
- there is continuous strong outreach into our neighborhood through efforts in neighborhood development, activities in the park, the Little Free Libraries, young adult programming, and youth programming,
- and we continue to reach out beyond our borders to Mirebalais, Haiti and Berlin, New York in our care for others.

What mostly impresses me is the richness of our prayer life overflowing through

- a diverse community of believers,
- faith-filled music and homilies,
- and a welcoming spirit which uniquely underlines what we are all about.

Our faith formation opportunities are rich and well executed. Few parishes our size have opportunities in so many different experiences, including:

- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd,
- excellent sacramental preparation programs,
- a powerful confirmation preparation program staffed by adults AND teens,
- a unique Generations of Faith process (see details on page 4 of this newsletter),
- and Lenten Emmaus Faith Sharing groups.

Yes, Corpus Christi knows how to celebrate, how to party, and how to pray. We are learning how to evangelize and bring the Good News of the Lord's goodness to our families and friends who may not have experienced His Spirit. We are walking the neighborhoods and visiting our neighbors, inviting them to come and know the goodness of the Lord.

But the Lord is not finished blessing us. For the first time that I am aware of, Archbishop Vigneron has allowed an incoming pastor (Fr. Patrick Gonyeau) to begin his assignment a year before the elder pastor (me) gives up the reigns. We have been working together diligently since July to make the "hand-off" smooth. I can tell you this much: we have been blessed with a man who is prayerful, energetic, loves people, and delights in the Lord. He chose to be in urban ministry and finds the Corpus Christi community a special blessing.

Yet all these blessings take place in the midst of the devastating news of sexual abuse by clergy and cover up by leadership in the Church. It is not easy to be a Catholic these days. But we are called to witness to the cleansing of a deep wound which has caused pain to so many people. We need to care for victims. We need to confront the core issues which cause crimes against our children and devastate our community. We also need to heal wounds. A month

ago I addressed the parish with ways we could personally respond. The comments are included in the next column. May the following petitions be on our lips and in our hearts:

We pray for all who have been abused,
whether physically, mentally,
emotionally, or sexually,
that the Lord of all tenderness and compassion
will restore them and give them peace.

We pray that we may become
more and more a community
that actively cares for and protects
the most vulnerable members of our society,
particularly our children.

Also included in this newsletter is a summary of the annual budget for Corpus Christi. I would like to thank all who give generously of your time, talent, and treasure to help all of us to carry out the mission of our community. Because of your generosity we have made \$6,100 of improvements (new cabinets and a new sink) in the Rainbow Room kitchen. Soon all the donations you made for the kitchen will be placed into their new settings. Also, we are just finishing the installation of a second boiler for the school. While the bill will be over \$48,000, your donations from last fiscal year will allow us pay it off.

Please keep Fr. Patrick and me in your prayer as we walk through this transition. May the Spirit of the Living God hover over all of us as we travel into the arms of the One who alone can give joy to our hearts.

Your brother in the Lord,



Fr. Don Archambault

A REFLECTION ON THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS IN OUR CHURCH by Fr. Don Archambault, August 21, 2018

Some Catholics are embarrassed, others repulsed, other ready to leave the church, still others are not even conscious of the scandal in Pennsylvania: 300 priests over a 70-year period involved in child abuse in the six dioceses of Pennsylvania; Cardinal McCarrick stripped of his ranking in the church because he was a sexual predator during his ministry; grief and anger over the sexual crimes and the cover up.

The leaders of our Church have a lot of work to do to address the sins of the situation. But we are not bishops. What can we do? Bishop Walter Hurley, the retired bishop from Grand Rapids who, took the lead in dealing with the crisis in our own Archdiocese many years ago will be invited to speak with us. But what can we do as individuals?

Let me suggest six points which came to me from a young priest, Fr. David Tomaszycski, associate pastor at Our Lady of Good Council Parish in Plymouth, Michigan:

- 1. Don't live a double life.** It is easy to fall into the pattern. Rather, we need to confess our sins even if we keep working on rooting the same ones out of our lives. Remember, a dirty old man was once a dirty young man.
- 2. Don't put priests on a pedestal.** There is a story of two policemen talking at a corner. A car goes racing past them 25 miles over the speed limit. One officer says to the other "why don't you go after him?" The other says, "Oh, that's my pastor. I can't do that!" By placing a priest on a pedestal, we put both him and those he hurts in jeopardy.
- 3. Speak up!** Bring things into the light. Trust what your children tell you what they say about a priest or a teacher or a favorite uncle.
- 4. It is an act of charity to speak up.** You are doing both the perpetrator and victim (and future potential victims) a favor.
- 5. Be holy!** We need rules and regulations in our society and church, but lawyers alone will not bring resolutions to the heart.
- 6. Pray and fast.** Jesus says that some demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting. It is a very different approach from the world's approach which is revenge, legal settlements.

It will be hard to be a Catholic today. People approach us and say, "Oh, you are a Catholic!" We, along with Christ, carry the cross for the sins of others. Jesus died because of other peoples' sins, not his own. We are called to join with Christ in his dying so that we may, with Him, celebrate his resurrection.