

NOTHING COMPARES *to Being There*



Dear Friends,

As the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel comes into view, we need to have the courage to engage it and step out in confidence. We belong together. We belong in communion with each other and the Lord. Our Faith tells us that the Lord is truly present in our community and particularly in the Eucharist. Jesus left himself to us as real food which we can really eat but only if we are really here.

It has been a difficult year and a half and many of our parishioners, family and friends have suffered deeply, but it is important that you know that each and every one of you is loved and cared for; first by our Heavenly Father “who will never leave you, nor forsake you.” (*Hebrews 13:5*), and second by me and your fellow parishioners.

As we have emerged from the darkness of those difficult days, I would like to invite you to reconnect fully with the parish, especially by returning to the in-person celebration of Mass. Many in our community found that live-streaming Mass was a helpful way to stay connected to God and to our parish during the pandemic. At the same time, all of us know instinctively that nothing compares to “being there” in person. We discovered this truth anew during the pandemic lockdowns when we were almost completely separated from one another.

While Zoom meetings and live-stream could serve as an interim solution, all of us felt the hunger in our hearts to be in the same room as our loved ones and to feel a handshake or a hug. If this is true on the level of our human relationships, how much more so with Jesus, who comes to be physically present to us at every Mass. **When it comes to Mass, truly we must say that nothing compares to being there.**

I write to you now as your pastor to invite you and your family back to the in-person celebration of the Eucharist. It is only here that you will find the strength that you need to navigate the trials of life, the love that you need for all of your relationships and the grace that you need to make your way to Heaven. It would be my delight to see you at Mass again and even more so, it would give joy to the heart of Jesus who awaits your presence at the altar.

With this said, it is our intention to discontinue the live-streaming of Mass after the Festival Mass which is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 15th.

I hope that you will now be encouraged to attend in person; however, if there is anything that I or the parish can do to assist you and help you to feel comfortable doing so, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Archbishop Nelson Perez has announced the Archdiocesan initiative, *“Nothing Compares to Being There”* which officially launches in September. Even as our faithful are being encouraged to attend Mass in person, the Archdiocese will continue to provide the live-stream Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. This Mass is celebrated by Archbishop Perez every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. If you are still not comfortable attending Mass in-person, I invite you to engage with the Mass at the Cathedral at: www.archphila.org.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank parishioner, Marge Seedor who stepped up at the beginning of the pandemic and learned how to live-stream the Mass. Marge has been here faithfully every Sunday, on Holy Days, special occasions, and even Funeral Masses with a joyful heart and spirit to bring the Mass into your homes. Please take a moment to thank Marge when you see her. She really went above and beyond the call of duty out of her deep love for Jesus Christ and the parishioners of Our Lady of the Assumption.

With Love and Prayers,
Fr. Carey

