

The Work of the People
Seventh Sunday of Easter

Change is in the air, and it is coming to a church near you. Because we at St. Anthony of Padua and St. Bernadette will be transitioning to a new way being Church, I am suspending my usual article and writing about the announcement I made last weekend at the Masses. If you heard this, it may be good to see it in print in case you missed anything I said.

You know that I will be retiring, after some fifty years of ordained ministry, in just a few months. When I first came on August 1, 2018, almost six years ago, and in my first homily, I said that I may be your last resident pastor. I have referred to that from time to time although I was trying to prepare you just in case.

Last Tuesday, April 30, the members of the Pastoral and Finance Councils met with Bishop Persico and Fr. Nicholas Rouch, Vicar General, who confirmed that St. Anthony of Padua and St. Bernadette will be merged into Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edinboro. We will be part of a larger parish. An historical side note is that Our Lady of the Lake, in its early days, was a mission of St. Anthony of Padua.

St. Anthony will continue its events (such as Bingo) and continue to have a weekend and a Holy Day Mass, and possibly a daily Mass. St. Bernadette will no longer have a regular weekend or Holy Day Mass but will continue to be available for weddings, funerals, and the celebration of the patron saint, St. Bernadette on her feast, April 16. Any activity that is presently happening at St. Bernadette will also continue.

I don't have any of the details of this merger because we are just beginning the transition. Fr. Mark Hoffman, the pastor of Our Lady of the Lake, and I met on Monday, May 6 and will continue to work together in this transition. Since I am the outgoing pastor, I won't be making any of the decisions but I will offer my input. As details become available, I will publish them in the parish bulletin. Please read the insert in today's bulletin concerning the history and present state of the area.

The basic reasons for this change are the declining church attendance and the declining number of priests in the diocese. When I was ordained in 1975, we had some 215 active priests in the Erie diocese. Today there are about 93, and it is

projected that in just six years, 2030, there will be only 65. Please see the insert for some of these statistics.

I had intended that June 30 be my last Sunday here as your pastor, but Bishop Persico has extended that to July 7. The changes of which I speak will officially take place on July 9, 2024.

I grieve with you whatever loss you will experience but encourage you to trust the work of the Holy Spirit and the help of our patrons, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Bernadette. In this time, let us pray for one another.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Acts 19:1-8/Jn. 16:29-33
Tuesday: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26/Jn. 15:9-17
Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38/Jn. 17:11b-19
Thursday: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11/Jn. 17:20-26
Friday: Acts 25:13b-21/Jn. 21:15-19
Saturday: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31/Jm. 21:20-25
Sunday: Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26/1 Jn. 4:11-16/
Jn. 17:11b-19

PRAYER REFLECTION
IN TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

*God of all knowing,
things are moving so fast,
everything I hold dear is changing,
disappearing,
being set aside.*

*We live in a time of short-term memory
and instant gratification.
I know the church is bigger than the
bricks and mortar
and beloved statues of my own house of worship.
But this my house.
It is the place my faith was shaped.
It is the keeper of my memories.
It is the table of communion and community.
It is the circle where our stories are told
again and again.*

*The stories of our ancestor in faith...
The ones who met God on mountains and in deserts.
Who lived in exile.
Who left their boats and families.
Who gathered in rented rooms and at the shores of the
sea.
All done in faith, believed yet unseen,
committed but not understood.
They too lived amid uncertainty.
They too felt fear and anger
and wondered whether they were forgotten, abandoned.
And yet they persevered over centuries, eons.
We are called to persevere, too.
If we are truly Christian, then our mission is not about
place, but people.
Like our ancestors, we may need to be church
in new ways...
Gathered on mountainsides or at sea shores...
Or at the very least in houses not our own.
We may need to open our arms and our hearts...
To welcome new people into our community,
To embrace the gifts and perspectives they will bring.
We may need to open our doors of community
wherever that may be.*

WORSHIP

Monday, May 13
 8:00 am + Liv. & Dec. Members of
 David & Christine Ochs Family

Tuesday, May 14
 8:00 am + James Samson (Kathleen Lipkovich)

Wednesday, May 15 - AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 8:00 am + John Weagraff (Jim & Shirley Nichol)

Thursday, May 16
 8:00 am + Ron Yusavage (Barbara Milligan)

Friday, May 17
 8:00 am + Liv. & Dec. Members of St. Anthony and
 St. Bernadette

Saturday, May 18
 4:30 pm + James Rasavage (Carol)

Sunday, May 19
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Dean Kropski Wilson (Winnie Kropski)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Douglas McGovern
 (Rhonda McGovern & Kenzie & Abe Delp)

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 14
 After Mass - St. Anthony Novena

Saturday, May 18
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession

Sunday, May 19
 AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Before Mass - Confession
 AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 After Mass - Confession

Monday, May 20
 5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO

CALENDAR LOTTERY FUNDRAISER

If you have unsold tickets for St. Anthony of Padua's Calendar Lottery Fundraiser for June please be sure to return them to the parish office or in the collection basket by May 13th. And if you need additional tickets they will be available after all weekend masses.

ST. BERNADETTE MISSION STEWARDSHIP	
Offertory	\$942.00
Maintenance	110.00
Good Shepherd	10.00
Ascension	40.00
International Needs	40.00
Peter's Pence	10.00
Candles	24.00
TOTAL	\$1,176.00

INTERNATIONAL NEEDS COLLECTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Ever since our Lord's admonition to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless, wherever and whomever they may be, the Church has been reaching out to those in need. Today I would like to ask you to join me, as members of the worldwide Catholic family, in helping the Church to continue to provide for our needy brothers and sisters throughout the world by giving generously to the *International Needs Collection* to be taken up in the Diocese of Erie the weekend of May 18-19.

This annual collection offers a concrete way for us to reach out to those who live in lands and cultures far from our own. It is a combination of three collections:

- The *Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe* which helps build churches; train and educate seminarians, clergy, and lay leaders; publish Catholic newspapers; support orphanages; and support evangelization among children, youth, and adults.
- The *Catholic Relief Services Collection* which helps all people, regardless of race, creed, or nation, providing for the victims of war and natural disasters, aiding the Church suffering under persecution, alleviating poverty, and educating the poor; and
- The *Support for the Church in Africa* collection, which provides for the rapidly growing and vibrant Church on that continent.

Please give generously to the International Needs Collection on May 18-19 and, just as importantly, please include those in need in your prayers. Be assured of my prayers for you and your families and parishes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
 The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
 Bishop of Erie

*Heavenly Father,
 bless all those you have entrusted
 with motherhood.
 Inspire them to follow the example of Mary,
 Mother of our Lord and follow in her fidelity,
 humility and selfless love.
 May all mothers receive your grace abundantly
 in this life, and may they look forward to
 eternal joy in Your presence in heaven.
 Amen*

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA STEWARDSHIP	
Offertory	\$1,398.00
Maintenance	449.00
Candles	34.00
Calendar Lottery	780.00
Roof Donation	220.00
CSA	910.00
Ascension	65.00
International Needs	50.00
TOTAL	\$3,906.00
Catholic Services Appeal	
Pledged: \$32,746 Paid: \$21,746	

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
