

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – APRIL 15, 2018

Dear Families and Parishioners,

This period from Easter to the Ascension of our Lord is one of great joy. The defeat of death is turned into the Victory of Life, rejoice and be glad for the Lord has risen.

March 19th, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, St. Francis signed his new Apostolic Exhortation which is entitled *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad). Pope Francis two previous exhortations, *The Joy of the Gospel* and *The Joy of Love*, emphasize the spirit of hope, joy, and the Lord's always provident favor. I will try over the weeks to pick out key phrases from this new Exhortation. Let me present to you a few early passages.

#3 The Letter to the Hebrews invites us to realize that “a great cloud of witnesses” impels us to advance constantly toward the goal of holiness. These witnesses may include our own mothers, grandmothers, or other loved ones. Their lives may not always have been perfect, but even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.

#7 I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect God's presence. We might call them “the middle class of holiness”.

#12...I would stress too that the “genius of woman” is seen in feminine styles of holiness, which are an essential means of reflecting God's holiness in the world. Indeed, in times when women tended to be most ignored or overlooked, the Holy Spirit raised up saints whose attractiveness produced new spiritual vigour and important reforms in the Church.

The Youngstown Diocese Begins 75th Anniversary on Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost Sunday marks the beginning of the 75th Anniversary of this Diocese. The first Bishop of the Youngstown Diocese, Bishop James McFadden, was an Auxiliary Bishop in Cleveland and was the one who administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to me at St. Christopher's Church. The logo for this 75th Anniversary bear the words “With Pride in the Past and Faith in the Future.”

Miscellaneous

Seven of our Youth Group who now inhabit The Lion's Den (the old Grotto Store) are going next Sunday to visit elderly people at the Altercare in Brimfield. They intend to engage them in conversation, write up a short biography of the person's life, and return and visit again.

Construction and renovation continues. You can easily see the new entrance to our school that will be especially useful for buses and picking up children. The Marchand brothers are scheduled to paint the columns of the church between June 2nd and June 15th. Mudd Construction will level the seating area in the Grotto and re-pour new concrete. In addition, a good deal of grass will replace the blacktop. Our wood carver, Dave Harper, has now placed a lamb in the Grotto area. Come and see!