

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JUNE 10, 2018

## Dear Families and Parishioners,

There is a **physical world**. We see it, we touch it, we hear it, we taste it, and we breathe it. We experience this world directly. No sane person doubts this physical world.

There is also a **spirit world**. However we cannot touch it, we cannot hear it, we cannot taste it, or breathe it. At least we do not do these things directly. We know of the spirit world only by signs and signs in which we have faith.

The physical world is beautiful but it also groans. The beauty we accept with joy; the groans stir us differently. The physical world is constantly being recast by natural occurrences, but also by human intervention and finally by human frailties and faults. Living in this physical world is a challenge amidst these groans.

The spirit world is even more mysterious. There appear to be even greater beauties but also malevolent forces that cause groans. The signs of beauty are many. One listens to the Cleveland Orchestra and the spirit is uplifted; the smile on a child's face and the spirit soars. Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.

The negative forces in the spirit world are more difficult to understand. The spirit world belongs to God and therefore it is hard to understand how there could be negative forces within the spirit world. The negative forces in the spirit world are ascribed to the devil.

The fifth chapter of Pope Francis's Exhortation (*Gaudete et Exultate*) speaks of the combat in the spirit world and the vigilance we must have. He says, "We will not admit the existence of the devil if we insist on regarding life by empirical standards alone, without a supernatural understanding." The devil and the forces of evil are real. They were real to Jesus as he was tempted in the desert and then again as he died on the cross. These forces continue to be in the spirit world of which we are a part.

We have the expression, "The devil made me do it." This usually refers to an event perpetrated by a person that is very negative. The person seems almost impelled by evil forces to do bad acts. Pope Francis tells us to realize that these bad forces called devil are real persons in the spirit world. Thus, we not only have a battle within the physical world but also in the spirit world.

For some, life might seem stacked against us both in the physical and in the spirit world. However, God has said to us, "I am with you always." God's power and love is stronger than any evil forces we find in the physical and in the spirit world.

God is stronger than all the moans and groans of the physical world and the spirit world. We are made in the image and likeness of God. We are His children. We pray in the Lord's prayer: "Deliver us from the evil one."