

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – JANUARY 27, 2019

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Our Place in the Diocese

Within the Youngstown Diocese St. Joseph Parish is a Rural Oasis of God's Grace and Superior Education blended with Faith. This statement is both our vision and our agenda. We as a parish may never sit on today but rather plan and dream of the future for ourselves and those to come.

The Village of St. Joseph is certainly rural. People remark to me often that on their first approach through the cornfields and barns and cattle, they come upon this stately church in surprise. So many are prompted to stop, visit the Grotto, view the happy children in the playground, and see the cemetery that surrounds this campus. St. Joseph invites prayer and blossoms with tranquility and peace.

The world that we see on our television screens is so different. The major powers of the world are contesting for personal ascendancy. Our country is locked in government controversy and lay-offs. The Bishops of the United States are struggling for a unified identity. The Diocese of Youngstown is grappling with diminishment.

Amidst these short statements, we find St. Joseph Village and our parish positive, growing, reflective, and peaceful. Our school is such an essential part of the parish. I cannot imagine this parish without a school and the vibrancy of the children. I thank all of you for supporting this vision of Superior Education and its constant agenda to grow in this vision.

The Gospel today speaks of Jesus guided by the Spirit returning to his own hometown of Nazareth. In just a few short months Jesus had grown from the boy and young man in Nazareth to the Teacher who was presenting the Word of God.

Soon he would journey to Cana of Galilee, a town near Nazareth. The Wedding Feast is another kind of oasis, a joyful time that so fits our current Holy Father who speaks of the Joy of the Gospel. Mary could not bear to see this joy at Cana blemished by the lack of wine. Mary is our constant intercessor. We are privileged to have the Grotto of Mary as part of our campus. She invokes Jesus presence and grace upon us. She asks Jesus to give us "The Wine" needed in our families.

Truly I see St. Joseph Parish as that Rural Oasis and surrounded by a bucolic cemetery. Can we be a point of light and inspiration to the Diocese of Youngstown? This role in the Diocese lies in the hands of each one of us. I thank the parents for sending the children to our school where God is not *verboten* but rather proclaimed.

I thank all of you for your weekly attendance at our church which inspires so many people. I thank all the fundraisers who work so diligently to quietly and without undo force acquire financial support.

This week the Parish Council and the Finance Committee will be meeting as we probe and dream the future not only for ourselves but for all that will follow. May Joseph, Mary, and Jesus continue to prosper us as a sign of hope and light to others as they come into this rural oasis called St. Joseph Village.