

## *Thoughts from the Rectory ...*

Dear friends of St. John the Evangelist,

Today we find ourselves in the midst of a novena of days between the great solemnities of the Ascension of the Lord and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. It is a time of waiting and expectation, eagerness and openness, action and anticipation. It is a time of prayer.

We hear in Sacred Scripture how the Lord appeared and rejoiced in the company of the apostles and select disciples following His Crucifixion and Resurrection. He who was declared dead upon the Cross, guilty of the sins of man who would be God, indeed was raised by the power of God who was made Man. In Christ Jesus, authentic communion between God and Man is established, and the divine and human are joined. In His Resurrection, earthly end loses its sting. In His Ascension, heavenly hopes open wide. We must now turn and set our sights on high.

In life, we may think that all we see is a slow trudge to the grave, with a few fleeting moments of happiness along the way. "The end is near" they say. Yet, in faith, we will know that our sights are set too low and that our true life and eternal joy is found in a heavenly savior. In Christ Jesus, Risen from the dead and now Ascended to Heaven, we are not left lost to a desolate earthly existence, but left hopeful to an eternal inheritance!

This week our Pastoral Council met and our pastoral commissions shared and discussed many good works, efforts, and activities. Again we celebrated the success of the Craft Fair and the opportunity it presented to share the joy of life at St. John the Evangelist. We also look forward to marking our 75 years

on Main Street throughout this year, especially with celebratory Mass and picnic in September.

Informed at the Pastoral Council and announced this weekend, we have learned through the Vicar General, Fr. Piotr Calik, that Bishop Byrne has established Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Easthampton as the diocesan center for the Extraordinary Form. For almost 7-8 years, St. John's has been one of the few places, and often the only one in the diocese, to offer the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, sometimes called the traditional Latin Mass. Pastors and administrators of our parish have endeavored to provide for its stability as a parish Mass and the pursuit of capable priests, appropriately trained, to celebrate it with regularity. This has not always been without difficulty but much grace and goodness has sustained us over the years.

Nevertheless, the threat of unavailable priests always loomed, and this became especially trying in the past few weeks. Hearing these concerns, we give thanks that Bishop Byrne is actively addressing them and providing support for the stability of this pastoral need. Beginning June 1 a regular Extraordinary Form Mass with diocesan support will be celebrated in Easthampton. To that end, our parish has been asked to suspend the celebration of the 1:30 Sunday Mass to allow for a centralization of efforts and maintenance of stability for the wider community. As all of our Masses serve the people of Agawam, this Mass was especially a great draw for families and faithful far beyond, even traveling an hour at times. With an EF Mass in Easthampton, there is hope it will be all the more convenient.

Let us pray together for continued devotion to the Holy Mass, in all its forms, and the

nearness of the Lord who confirms us in His  
grace!

*St. John the Evangelist, pray for us!*

**Fr. Pierz**