

Thoughts from the Rectory ...

Dear friends of St. John the Evangelist,

“Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves” (Jm 1:21-22). While our second reading at Mass is most often taken from the Epistles of St. Paul, who exhorts and challenges us frequently and boldly, this week’s apostolic letter comes from another Apostle and follower of the Lord. St. James found himself among the original Twelve and privileged to hear the words of eternal life as they were first spoken. He walked with our Savior and, after the events of Our Lord’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection, would go out to proclaim salvation in His name until his own martyrdom. He was a doer of the word and not a hearer only.

Through the witness of first apostles and disciples, the teaching of Jesus and His salvific mission reaches to our own lands and our own times. It is the very lives and voices of those who profess themselves Christians and are united to the Mystical Body of Christ in word and deed that we too may become sharers in divine life and witnesses ourselves.

Four weeks from today we will have the chance to gather for a proud day and memorable encounter. We celebrate the dedication of our parish church and the 75 years that the life and truth of Christ has been faithfully preached here on Main Street!

Bishop Thomas Mary O’Leary, a priest of Manchester, New Hampshire appointed and installed as Bishop of Springfield a hundred years ago this year, would offer the ritual Mass for the dedication of the altar and church in his 25th year of episcopal ministry on

September 29th, 1946. That day, a Sunday, was the Solemnity of the Archangel Michael (today joined by Gabriel and Raphael as well), who happens to be the patron of our diocese here in Western Massachusetts.

This year we will gather on the nearest Sunday, which happens to be September 26th. We will have the honor of hosting Bishop William Byrne, our current Bishop of Springfield, as principal celebrant. As the men, women, and children of Agawam today, we will join together as the contemporary witnesses to Jesus Christ, inheritors of His divine message, and descendants of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who established this Main Street community. Following Mass we will continue the celebration with our parish picnic and further rejoicing. Join me now in praying for a beautiful day and preparing to remember the joys of faith and practice over the past 75 years! Welcome one and all as we welcome the word that is able to save our souls!

St. John the Evangelist, pray for us!

Fr. Pierz