

BY THE WAY . . .

- The **weekend schedule** of Masses at Saint Anthony's is now back to "normal," namely 5:30 PM on Saturday, and Sunday at 7:00, 8:30, 10:00 and 12:00 Noon. Last weekend approximately 250 parishioners were present at one of the five Masses. All attendees (Over the age of 2) must wear face masks, and observe social distanced seating in the church.

For the last several weekends we have had Saturday Confessions in the Jubilee Garden between the rectory and the school. Surprisingly, so far, that has worked out all right, despite the noise from the street traffic and the rectory air conditioning units.

At least for the time being, the weekday Mass (Monday through Saturday) will remain at 10:30 A.M. It is being live streamed (as is also the 10:00 AM Mass on Sunday) but is also open to the public. There are a number of issues involved in the discussion about the time of the daily Mass, and I will have to weigh those issues before we come to a permanent time.

During weekday Mass I ask everyone to please sit in the front half of the church. If we can keep from using the back half (beyond the Baptismal font) it cuts down on the sanitizing we have to do after every Mass.

Holy Communion is received in the hand at the present time, and no gloves may be worn for Holy Communion.

Social distancing applies to any service which takes place in the church, including funerals. Only those people who are "isolating (living) together" may sit together in the same pew.

- **Convent News:** On Saturday, August 15, our new bishop, Bishop Kevin Sweeney will make his first visit to Saint Anthony's to preside at the Rite of Final Profession for **Sister Elfie del Rosario, F.M.A.** who will profess her Perpetual Vows as a Salesian Sister that morning. For the past two years Sister Elfie has been the Pre-K Three teacher in Saint Anthony's School.

That same morning will mark the Golden Jubilee of **Sister Betty Ann Martinez, F.M.A.** our Parish Director of Religious Education, and former Principal, who made her first profession of vows as a Salesian Sister in 1970. Due to Covid19 considerations, the Salesian Sisters have chosen to forgo their community's Jubilee Celebration this summer, and celebrate two years together next Summer. Nevertheless, this year is Sister Betty Ann's actual 50th anniversary. Congratulations to both these fine religious women who have served Saint Anthony's so well over the years.

Sister Elfie will barely have time to celebrate her profession before she has to pack her trunk, because she is being transferred to the Corpus Christi – Holy Rosary School in Portchester, New York.

Sister Maria Colombo, F.M.A. the Provincial Secretary for the Salesian Sisters and Animator for our convent, will also be leaving us to take up residence in the Provincial Headquarters in Haledon. Since we have "isolated" together over these past pandemic months, I will especially miss Sister Maria and her wise counsel.

Sister Marisol Guzman Lopez, F.M.A., a young sister currently in Tampa, Florida will be coming to Saint Anthony's to teach in Saint Anthony's School.

May God bless all these comings and goings, and help all these fine religious women to continue to serve Christ and his Church in their new assignments.

- I extend my sympathy, and that of the whole parish, to Sister Betty Ann Martinez, F.M.A. on the recent death of her father, **Anselmo Martinez**. Mr. Martinez died last week in Texas at the age of 90 as a result of the Covid 19 virus.

- This Thursday, August 6, is the **Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord**. The feast commemorates a moment in the final journey of Jesus to Jerusalem for His Passion and Death, when, in the presence of his apostles, Peter, James and John, he is transfigured before them by a bright light and they get a glimpse of God's glory – a glimpse, if you will, of the big picture! The event is commemorated in the fourth Luminous Mystery of the Rosary. The ceremonial stand that we use to elevate the Monstrance during Eucharistic Adoration, is called a "tabor" for that reason.

Scripture says that the event took place "on a high mountain," and tradition holds that Mount Tabor in Lower Galilee is the site. Tabor is a "monadnock," a stand-alone mountain that rises abruptly from the Jezreel plain. It can be seen for miles. The site has been a place of Christian devotion since ancient times. One of the earliest recorded Holy Land pilgrimages made by the Spanish nun Egeria in the 380s mentions visiting Mount Tabor. On the top today there are two churches, one Greek Orthodox and the other Catholic. The Franciscans, who have custody of most of the shrines in the Holy Land, have a small monastery attached to the Catholic Church. The current church, built on top of several previous churches, was constructed in 1924 and designed by the Italian architect, Antonio Barluzzi, who is responsible for a number of major churches in the Holy Land, including the Church of All Nations in the Garden of Gethsemani. The church features a beautiful mosaic of the Transfiguration. On August 6 the sun beams hit glass panels in the church floor and the reflection causes the mosaic to be bathed in light.

With the usual cultural/religious/political dichotomy that marks present-day Israel, the only access to Mount Tabor is through Shibli, an almost entirely Muslim village at the base of the mountain. The road to the top is too twisty and narrow to allow tour buses, so access is by 8-10 passenger minivans from the village. So, the entire access to this Christian site is a thriving monopoly industry run by Muslims! (There is a small gift shop run by the Franciscans at the church; but it is nothing compared to the gift shop and ice cream counter run by the Muslims at the jitney transfer station).

The first time I led a trip to the Holy Land, I thought I was really blessed to have so many people that we required two buses – until I was told that we would not be able to stop at Mount Tabor because we had too many people. The logistics of emptying out two buses of people and transferring them to mini-vans up the mountain and back down again would be so time-consuming that we would have to spend all day at Mount Tabor, and, with a packed agenda, we did not have an entire day to dedicate to just one place! It was a source of much disappointment to see Mount Tabor in the distance, but not be able to go there.

The next time I led a trip to the Holy Land, I made sure there was a cut-off in people because I was determined to get to Mount Tabor. It has become my favorite place in the Holy Land. Perhaps there is a lesson there about traveling light and not being so burdened and tied down that we are stuck at the base and fail to see the glory God wishes to reveal for us.

*You shed light for your peoples, Lord Jesus,
on the way of the Cross,
when they contemplated you on the mountain.
Lead us today along this way
of lowliness and glory,
for you are the Beloved Son,
who has the words of eternal life,
and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.*

God bless you all,

Father Ray