

From the Pastor's Desk:

It has been nice to get back to Gardner. Unfortunately, when I was in Rome I didn't get close enough to Pope Francis to say "hi" from you all. I did have the privilege of saying a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at an altar placed over the tombs of saints Simon and Jude - two of the twelve apostles. I offered this Mass for all of you and for the continued healing in our parish. After I finished, I knelt in front of the tomb and prayed that as two of the churches first pastors they would pray to the Lord to make me a good pastor. I felt a sense of peace and left the church very uplifted.

We had a successful Spring Festival this past weekend - thanks to all who worked so hard to bring others together! This Festival is both an important means of support for our school, and also one of the many positive social opportunities we are trying to highlight. When we pray together, and when we play together, we are brought closer together. Support from activities like the Festival allow us to offer a very reasonable tuition and be able to work to grow the school and its programs; I will be speaking more in upcoming columns about the sometimes unrecognized value of a Catholic education. I have already received commitment from pastors of neighboring parishes to support their parishioners coming to Holy Family, and we are looking towards a future of growth. In Staff Meeting I highlighted that we need to place the growth of the school on the "front burner." With our new methods of tuition assistance in place, and plans for improvement, our school is moving to be better and more affordable than ever. Thanks to all who let people know about this great educational opportunity for young people.

Due to feedback from Pastoral Council regarding the environmental impact of the new proposed solar project (at St. Joseph Cemetery), and due to some contract details raised in Finance Council I have slowed things down a bit. I have been in contact with the solar company and our lawyers regarding these concerns. I remind you that if you have any concerns regarding this project or the sales and use of items from Sacred Heart and St. Joseph churches - please see me.

In today's Gospel Jesus says "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." The more we can stretch ourselves to recognize where we fail to love one another *as Jesus loves* - the more we open ourselves to the possibilities of experiencing the joy that comes from giving and receiving this love to a greater degree. Love is the cement that binds us together, love is the thing that opens our heart to Jesus, love is the very presence of God.

The Love of God be with you all,

Fr. Steve