

From the Pastor's Desk:

Well the weather is getting a little more in line with the season - and I like that! Despite some last minute snow during last week, we are pulling out of a long Winter. Spring is one of my most favorite times of the year. We double down on the joy of Easter by watching the earth come back to life. Flowers come out, trees that have looked like dead bunches off stick get their leaves back, and we can hear the sounds of birds in the morning. All of this is a reminder of the presence of God - the natural world and its rhythms and harmony remind us of the wonder of God's creation.

I am also pleased with the progress we have been making as a community. The confidence I feel in our staff and the dedicated parish leaders makes me feel very uplifted and comfortable. So comfortable, in fact, that I will be taking a vacation. I will miss you all next weekend as I will be taking in an invitation and opportunity to spend five days in Rome. I will be visiting our seminarian Lucas LaRoche and the other Worcester seminarians studying there as I find time to take in the sights, sounds (and food) of the city. This will be the first time in many years that I have taken a trip like this for a vacation and I will be remembering you all and my home here in Gardner while I am eating gelato and walking in the evening air. I will be thinking of you all because I am at heart a homebody (which is why I rarely go on such trips) and I have found a home with you here at Annunciation - I will be praying for you, please do the same for me.

We had productive discussion in Pastoral Council this past week, and we continue to identify how to best use the items from our churches that are part of our common heritage as the Catholic church of Gardner . It is a history made up of four parishes melded into a new fifth parish. We continue to carry on the legacy of those four historical parishes as we strive to bring unity and peace to all those who called these parishes home. I will be telling you more about the results of other agenda items in future columns.

On another note, the paperwork has been all but completed for the solar project in the area behind Norte Dame cemetery. The same company has approached us to place another facility in the wooded area behind St. Joseph cemetery. Please feel free to contact me or one of the Pastoral Council members with your thoughts on this. I have made specific stipulations regarding the construction of a visible barrier for the first facility to minimize its impact, and we would do the same here, if we go forward.

I remind you that brochures detailing our parish ministries are available in the back of the churches, with more information on the website. Please remember to keep the growth of our parish and school in your prayers - with all that is happening, I know that God is listening.

God Bless,

Fr. Steve