



Dear Friends,

Last Monday the Tribune published an editorial cartoon depicting a guy bent back, arms flailing at the sky, eyes scrunched in anguish and screaming “*WHAT ELSE YOU GOT 2020?!!*” I’m sure we all can relate. It’s almost hard to remember what life was like back in January and February. “Stay at home,” “keep social distance,” “wear a mask” have become the hallmarks of the “new normal.” The recent explosion of groups in bars or on beaches attest to the pent-up frustration of living the life of a monk. And the virus demonstrates its continuing power with the subsequent spike in the number of new cases and deaths. Floundering around like a boat caught in a storm, we await the next big wave.

Everyone in some way has been touched by the closing down of the national and international economy. The 300% increase of customers at our food pantry attests to that. Hundreds have been furloughed and many have lost their jobs outright. Small store owners have watched their business shrivel and die. And the government support is about to expire.

Along with the difficulties spawned by the coronavirus we have the upheaval in our streets. Racism, called by one writer “the original sin of our nation,” has once more raised its head reminiscent of the 1960’s. Once again, the nation debates the issue; once again violence grabs the attention which should be spent on the debate. While hopes may be high, changing a culture will take decades.

Within all this turmoil our parish has suffered another wave hitting our boat: last month St. Louise de Marillac School closed its doors for good. This is like a death in the family for the students, parents and supporters past and present of this school. People of Brookfield know only too well the pain of losing a school. Some are still grieving. For the people of St. Louise this is a fresh wound.

As in all deaths there was denial and then anger. By God’s grace and the passage of time we may come to accept this passing, but right now the wound is too new; the pain too real. As a Christian people we turn to God to sustain us, walk with us and heal us.

We offer heartfelt thanks to the men, women and children who have enlivened the halls of our school over the years and brought hope and joy to our people. We can take comfort from the gift of the adults who gave of themselves for our school. We can be proud of the classes of children we have sent forth with a firm foundation for high school, college and life. We give thanks, too, to the children who have challenged us and taught us as only kids can. As the Lord said, “...of such is the Kingdom of God.”

As much as death can bring us down, life lifts us up. We are people of the Resurrection, believing that life doesn’t stop, only changes. We still have children in our parish who need our help to learn about and meet the Lord. We still have the reminder through *Renew My Church* that we are disciples of Christ with

a mandate from him to make disciples. To accomplish that, we have to re-open our parish churches which calls for **lots** of volunteers over many months. We have lots to do to serve our children and our parish family. Have you signed-up to help?

St. Paul used the analogy of a human body to describe the Body of Christ (the Church).

*[As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.... Now the body is not a single part, but many. (I Cor. 12)]* If the Body of Christ in Brookfield and LaGrange Park is to be whole and healthy, *all the members need to do their part*. Faith is not individualistic, but communal. Just as with the coronavirus, we can't only think of ourselves; we have to think of our parish community, too. We have to discover our part in this local Body of Christ.

Coronavirus teaches that we are not the rulers of this planet, but *a part* of the nature of this planet; a part of the "body of the planet." Let this re-opening of our parish's church teach us we are *a part* of the family of Holy Guardian Angels. It's our "new normal."

Like that guy in the cartoon, we all can shout "*What Else Have You God 2020?!!*" As followers of Christ, we need to ask God "what do you want us to do now and what's my part?"

*Fr. Denis*