Dear Friends,

Truly the Fall has arrived and the temperatures have dropped. There is that chill in the air, the wind had picked up from time to time, and when the sun is shining, there is a brilliant golden hue, especially at sunrise and sunset. The seasonal change signals to us the regular cycle of transitions in our lives from year to year. We see the leaves changing, falling, and soon, we will be in the dark days of winter. For some, perhaps more poignantly for those experiencing their first Seattle winter, it can seem interminable, as the rain falls each day. (This was my experience when I arrived here from the Big Sky Country of Montana.) Yet, we always have the hope of Spring not too far away.

As Catholics, we always look forward with hope, no matter what the situation in which we find ourselves. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, encourages them saying, “We know that all things work for good for those who love God.” (Romans 8:28) Although we do not know the plans God has for us, in the struggle, we hold on to hope and look forward to the Spring, to the new life He wants to bring forth.

As we bade farewell to Fr. Joseph on October 4th and watched him ride off into the beautiful sunset that evening, we still had not received word about our new parochial vicar. The plan, as we communicated to you previously, was that we were going to receive Fr. Louis Emil who would come to us from Ghana. Fr. Emil went for his interview to obtain a visa and was denied. Right now, we are in a period of waiting, of unsurety as to who will be our next parochial vicar. For now, we will have a rotation of priests to help us cover the Masses on the weekend and when I am gone (we will be headed to Haiti on the 24th).

As I related this to the Pastoral Council, while we were discussing the process of pastoral planning which we have begun, it was suggested that we pray for our parish and God’s plan for us. As St. Paul said to us last weekend in his letter to the Philippians, “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6-7) In times of unsurety and instability, it is prayer that grounds us on the cornerstone who is Christ, our hope.

As this is the month of the rosary, we decided to encourage parishioners to pray a novena to Our Lady of the Rosary. We will begin together this Sunday October 15th. I have included here a prayer to guide us daily, as we bring our intentions to the loving care of Our Lady, trusting that she will guide us to the sure and stable Rock who is her son, Jesus.

My dearest Mother Mary, behold me, your child, in prayer at your feet. Accept this Holy Rosary, which I offer you in accordance with your requests at Fatima, as a proof of my tender love for you, for the intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in atonement for the offenses committed against your Immaculate Heart, and for this special favor which I earnestly request in my Rosary Novena: For the stability of the parish of St. Anthony and her parishioners.

I beg you to present my petition to your Divine Son. If you will pray for me, I cannot be refused. I know, dearest Mother, that you want me to seek God’s holy Will concerning my request. If what I ask for should not be granted, pray that I may receive that which will be of greater benefit to my soul.

I offer you this spiritual “Bouquet of Roses” because I love you. I put all my confidence in you, since your prayers before God are most powerful. For the greater glory of God and for the sake of Jesus, your loving Son, hear and grant my prayer. Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation. Amen

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,

Fr. Jack D. Shrum
Pastor