

PASTOR'S NOTE

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many thanks for your prayers during our annual Priest Days Retreat at Ocean Shores. It was so good to spend time both socially and in prayer with my brother priests.

As a presbyterate, we also spent time talking about Partners in the Gospel – the strategic pastoral planning initiative for our local church which began in January 2023. This initiative is a response to many of the realities impacting parish life today.

What are some of these challenges? In the last 10 years, we have witnessed significant shifts in religious practice in our region. We are experiencing a tremendous drop in Mass attendance and participation in Sacraments overall. In the past 10 years, baptisms declined 30% and weddings declined 20%. With a decrease in parish participation, some/many of our parishes are struggling financially. These statistics predate the COVID -19 epidemic, which drastically accelerated these trends.

Today we have about 80 diocesan priests for 174 parishes and missions. By 2036, we estimate we will only have 66 diocesan priests, and project fewer seminarians as well. The signs of the times compel us to act. I encourage you to go to our website to view the Partners in the Gospel video and review the current reality report. The more we understand the “why” the better we will be able to engage in this initiative to re-invigorate our Catholic parishes and parishioners across the Archdiocese. Please continue to keep Partners in the Gospel in your best thoughts and prayers.

Please join us for our monthly “Share the Journey Holy Hour” this Sunday, July 2nd from 7 to 8 p.m.

Also, please note that we will celebrate First Friday Mass on July 7th at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. The evening Mass will be preceded by the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 5 to 6 p.m. and followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with Adoration throughout the night.

Have a blessed and happy Fourth of July!

Peace+



Fr. Tom
Pastor



Parish Ministry
Office Closure

**July 4, 2023, Tuesday,
Independence Day**

Share the Journey

Join us for an
Holy Hour
Sunday, July 2 at
7—8 PM
Church

**Important
Update**



Please send all **bulletin articles** to Mona @
mfonseca@at-anthony.cc

Thank you!