



Weekly Email from *Father Paul Wharton*

April 15, 2023

On Easter Monday afternoon I went to see my optometrist for an overdue exam. My least favorite part has always been the questions that I am repeatedly asked as I gaze through a strange device. "Which looks clearer? Number 1 or number two? Number 3 or number four, etc." Sometimes the choices are so close it can be difficult. But it always results in a prescription for lenses to make my life easier.

Last December a search committee and I interviewed two people to be part-time Director of Religious Education. I agreed to be your Pastor when assured a replacement for Jeanne Haas would be in place. What became clear to the Search Committee and me was that she was graciously doing so many things, and that no one would be willing to take on as much and do it so well. Only after a well-deserved retirement did people realize how much she had taken on and many things she was doing.

The reason why I sought to hire a part-time Director of Religious Education is because my 40+ years of experience as a parish priest tells me that is what I need most. So many things Jeanne was doing can be done by enabled and empowered parishioners. A few wonderful examples of this: Tommy Ross is the head of our Christian Initiation of Adults, Shelley Nason is ably chairing the Liturgy Committee, newly initiated Liz James agreed to head up the Easter Egg Hunt with Jackson Davis after she already volunteered to be the Vacation Bible School Coordinator.

Each and every member of Blessed Sacrament Parish have been given by God certain gifts and talents which can be used to build up the body of Christ. Parishioners have, are, and will continue to minister and serve. Don't forget that Tommy Ross and Tony O'Leary are in the Deacon Formation Program and will become a critical part of our parish.

The Search Committee and I interviewed two capable candidates late last year. Bob Pennington had the credentials: a Doctorate in Practical Theology. Good

things are happening now because of him. Unfortunately, he made a bad choice and actions have consequences. He resigned.

I did not want to have a long, drawn-out process for a new hire and suggested we hire the other candidate whom we interviewed. He lacks the credentials, but then so did Jeanne when she was hired. The Search Committee was enthusiastic with the understanding the new person would work towards becoming credentialed and a job description be agreed upon. On Easter Monday night, I consulted with the Pastoral Council who also liked the idea.

I have hired one of our own to be our new Director of Religious Education, Mike Granata. Mike is faith filled, cheerful, humble, organized, outgoing, and willing to do whatever it takes to help grow the Faith Formation of children, youth, and adults. So much of what he did in 35 years at Appalachian Electric Power is finely suited for his new position: building caring relationships, helping teams perform, strategic planning, problem solving, and enabling effective communication to improve achieve goals.



Please pray for Mike and offer him your encouragement, support, and help as we grow in faith, hope, and love at Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes it takes a while to make the right choice. But, like making something from scratch, it is well worth the time and effort. May God's blessings be upon him and us as we seek to do God's will.

Father Paul