



FATHER PAUL'S WEEKLY EMAIL

January 26, 2024

I am away on vacation and am especially grateful to Fr. John Finnell who is preaching and presiding this coming weekend. Blessed Sacrament Parish is blessed by having several Priests and Sisters as well as one retired Deacon as part of our community and parishioners who've been here for decades. The next paragraph is from my weekly email one year ago this weekend.

“In the summer of 1965, my dad drove five children in a VW Bus from Parkersburg, WV to Miami, FL, a trip of slightly more than 1,000 miles. The WV Turnpike was a two-lane road, the Interstate was largely still in the planning stages, and Dad somehow drove about 24 hours straight. There was nothing to keep us kids ages 8 to 14 entertained but ourselves. Anyone who has ever traveled a distance with young children knows the question which will punctuate the journey: “Are we there yet?” No doubt Dad lost count of how often he was asked just that. When we left Parkersburg that summer, we children mostly had had no idea how long we would be prisoners inside a hot, noisy three door metal box on wheels.”

In last year's email, I then asked, “Will we ever get back to normal?” When the pandemic struck our lives, our families, our parish, and our world were forever changed. The truth is there is no going back to the way things were. Attendance and financial support is still less than before in an overwhelming number of religious congregations of all types. However, it is great to see signs of promise and progress. Here are a few.

- Faith Formation for children and adults is proceeding well with good choices.
- Our parish continues to help a variety of charities make a difference.
- The number of volunteers is growing. There has been an amazing response to the Diocesan requirement for VIRTUS certification for the safety of our children.
- Food and fellowship opportunities are back in big ways: Lunch Bunch, Coffee and Cookies, Thanksgiving Dinner and Christmas Brunch.

Remember and believe these two articles of faith: (1) Jesus is with us always. (2) With God all things are possible.

Phone: Office (304) 744-5523
Parish website
Faith in West Virginia
This Sunday's Readings

Cell: (304) 433-7472 Email: pjw424@gmail.com
<https://www.blessedsacramentwv.org>
<https://faithinwv.org/latest-bulletin/>
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/012824.cfm>

Live, Local, and Late Breaking

JEANNE HAAS is presenting a talk on Lent & Holy Week on Sunday, Feb. 28 from 10:15 - 11:15 am in the Church. It will be live streamed & saved for later viewing. It will help us prepare for the coming Season of Lent.

SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE SHARING MEN'S GROUP meets Saturday mornings at 9am in the library or on Zoom. Currently we are in Matthew chapter 26. Questions are asked, thoughts are shared, insights given, occasional bursts of laughter, experiences shared, prayers offered, and more. In the words of Jesus, "Come and see."

POEM Convulsed

And the unclean spirit,
convulsing him and crying with a loud voice,
came out of him.

—Mark 1.26

Demons don't leave easily.
Power tightens its grip.
There are recriminations. Harsh words.
Withdrawal symptoms.

Letting go of old habits,
slipping torturous comforts,
shedding false assurances, inner bullies—
they drag their hooks on the way out.

Sometimes doubt and tension,
resistance, even a little ripping,
might be what it feels like
being torn up out of the grave.
— Steve Garnaas-Holmes www.unfoldinglight.net

MYSTIC MORSEL

Desire nothing but God: seek for nothing but God: and
you shall taste of peace: you shall taste it in defiance of the world.
— Francois Fenelon (1651-1715)

CARBONATED GRACE ***

- I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore and forget all at the same time!
- Went to an antique auction and people were bidding on me. HA!
- People who wonder if the glass is half empty or half full, miss the point. The glass is refillable.

- I don't have grey hair; I have wisdom highlights.
- Sometimes it takes me all day to get nothing done.
- One minute you're young and fun. The next, you're turning down the car stereo to see better.
- Common sense is not a gift. It's a punishment because you have to deal with everyone else who doesn't have it.
- I came. I saw. I forgot what I was doing. Retraced my steps. Got lost on the way back. Now I have no idea what's going on.

*** Anne Lamott calls laughter *carbonated grace*