

June 13, 2021

Friends in Christ,

This week marks the eleventh Sunday in ordinary time; however things are anything but *ordinary* for our communities yet and truly, what will *ordinary* look like on the other side of this.

In my recent journey with cancer, everyone in my care team kept telling me that I would find a *new normal*. I heard this so much that I absolutely wanted to shout at the top of my lungs that I liked the old normal and I did not want a new normal—that is not the way things work though. We all know that life evolves and changes and each event that we experience shapes who we are and what we become. So it is with our parish communities also. For our communities at St. Thomas and Our Lady Star of the Sea, this has been a very trying and difficult time this past year, but these communities are remarkable and resilient!

Last Friday, I heard some of our parishioners gather and talk about the things that make our parish and mission special. I heard things like, they have their own charism that is unique; there is something truly exceptional about them—something that draws you in; these communities are family—those are realities that I believe we all could agree with, and they give us a wonderful foundation as we begin to find our new normal.

As I was reflecting on the gospel reading for this Sunday, and how Jesus shares that the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, grows into one of the largest of plants, it makes me feel hopeful about our communities that are filled with so much faith. Even as challenging as these past months have been, we have opportunities ahead of us to reach out, to invite in, to touch lives and become even stronger and more vibrant faith communities perhaps in new and different ways.

What does the new normal look like for our communities? Although, we have no way of knowing for certain, I do know that together, the special people of St. Thomas and Star of the Sea will spread the seeds of faith among their communities, and though we do not know how, they will sprout and grow.

My *new normal* is not what I had expected and although I really liked the old normal (and to be perfectly honest there are some things about the new normal that I do not like), the new normal has given me gifts that I would have never expected. I have found that I have a new profound appreciation for everything in my life. Each day is a gift. Each person in my life is a treasure. Each breath of air that I take is its own miracle. The same could be said for our parishes; it may not be what we expect, there may be some things about it that we do not really like, but my sense is that we will all have a new appreciation for the many gifts that our communities provide us with and for one another.

This week, I am going to try to reflect on the mustard seed of faith and all the potential that it has in our communities as we continue to evolve to our *new normal* this eleventh week of ordinary time. I pray that as we begin our journey back to more of what we are all familiar with, that we are drawn together stronger than ever by the one thing we hold dear—our faith!

Peace+

Lorrie - Pastoral Coordinator