Dear People of God,

I hope and pray that all is well with you and your loved ones as we celebrate Catholic School’s Week!

From the very beginning of Jesus’s earthly ministry, He taught the importance of continually growing in discipleship. Regularly, He taught the apostles to study the Scriptures. At the Ascension, Jesus commanded His disciples to go forth and teach all nations.

Throughout the centuries the Church has carried out this mission. We have held Councils and Synods to define the faith more fully. We have formed new religious orders, lay institutes, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and a global system of Catholic education to continue our mission across the ages. This is indeed a heritage to be proud of and celebrate!

This tradition continues to flourish at our Parish, despite the limitations of the pandemic. Our youth are catechized and continue to grow in the faith through the blessing of technology in the virtual world. Accordingly, the Christian Formation of our adults has transitioned to various digital platforms. Like the Church has throughout the ages, we have allowed God’s grace to transform how we live out the mission given to us by our Savior.

As we all know from our study of and journey in the faith, introspection is an integral part of growth. Further, we know that the deepest insights are gained by looking backward. This is because we have the blessing of distance for perspective and the blessing of time for reflection. Certainly, every disciple of Jesus Christ around the globe has learned more about living the faith in this journey on Pandemic Road.

**So, how do we teach others what we have learned?**

Our Pastoral Staff has been discerning a way for our community to answer that question. God helped us to build on the secular foundation of the “Kindness Rock Project”. Back in 2015, Megan Murphy was inspired to begin this endeavor on Cape Cod. Over time, the concept grew to international proportions and occupied much of the virtual world, as well. Even in our locale, the tradition has touched our landscape.

As a reflection on the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus’s Paschal Mystery, we will be creating a special **C**ommunity **O**ffered **V**ision **I**nspired by the **D**isease **STONES FAITH** **GARDEN** on our campus. In it we will teach each other how God has worked in our lives during the last year. This community testimony to God’s activity and presence will continue the teaching of the faith passed on throughout the centuries. Through these Covid stones (S is the 19th letter of the alphabet, ironically enough), we will establish a lasting memorial to the power of God’ at work in His faithful people.

 Just like each person of previous generations of disciples each had to act, so too must each of us. The more Covid stones we add to our new faith garden, the more powerful our witness of faith will be. We hope that each member of our community will participate! Likewise, we trust that each Council, Committee, parish group, and all of our various ministries will join our families in preparing a stone showing their vision of faith inspired by the disease.

The stone for the faith garden should be no larger or wider than a smartphone, although it may be up to six inches deep. It should then be painted with a few words or images to describe how God worked in you throughout the pandemic. Perhaps it was a new appreciation of some aspect of our Church tradition. Maybe it was growth in a particular virtue or devotion. Certainly, the stones will be as varied as the living stones of the Church who prepare them!

Finally, these representations of our faith journey should be properly sealed and allowed to dry completely. In Lent, we will be providing guidance and suggestions on the best practices of rock painting to ensure that our **C**ommunity **O**ffered **V**ision **I**nspired by the **D**isease **STONES** **FAITH GARDEN** endures the test of time. Likewise, as our community discerns the proper location, we will provide instruction for socially distant safe delivery or pick up. Of course, we will hold a dedication ceremony and blessing of all who participated.

This Lenten project is an exciting time for our family of faith. Like the pandemic itself, it is a once in a century opportunity for us to witness our faith and truly be the disciples of Jesus Christ in His Catholic Church in the Covid age. Please begin to pray about how God wants to use you as His instrument. He will guide your painting as surely as He inspired Michelangelo in his teaching of the faith!

May God continue to bless you in your Lenten journey and inspire you in the Catholic School’s tradition of teaching the faith!

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