

To the Young People of Our Parish:

I always look forward to this time of year. The weather is getting better and the days longer. School will soon be over, although it's been an unusual second semester. I've encountered a few of our parishioners who are in high school and they agree that they never thought they would hear themselves say that they wish they were in school. Maybe you feel the same way.

It is an especially difficult time for those graduating from 8th grade and high school. You are not able to celebrate all the rituals and good times associated with graduation.

As we face the isolation and disappointments which have been brought on due to this pandemic, it is often helpful to look at lessons learned and insights to be gained from our experience. With this in mind, I would like to share with you a reflection that was written by a parishioner of ours who is graduating from PC this year. I hope you find some inspiration and comfort in his words.

God Bless!

Father Joe

“Each year, I have the privilege of spending a weekend on retreat with my high school’s senior class. The theme of the retreat is ECHO: Encountering Christ in Others. Throughout the weekend, participants come to understand Christ’s presence within their life, noticing Him in their classmates, family, friends, and even the strangers they pass every day. Students spend years looking forward to their senior retreat and I, as a leader, get so excited to join them on this transformative weekend. Unfortunately, this Spring’s ECHO retreat was canceled due to the Coronavirus. Though I had participated in and helped lead the retreat several times, I still looked forward to spending the weekend reflecting on Christ’s presence in my life through others. Weeks later, the Coronavirus pandemic has left us quarantined in our homes with many of us glued to screens showing images of suffering, death, and hopelessness. Many of us, myself included, may feel our faith tested during this time. Despite the horrors of the pandemic, we can still see Christ’s presence. He is on the front lines of the battle against Coronavirus inside of every nurse, doctor, and healthcare professional on the twelfth hour of their grueling shift. He is inside of each truck driver and farmer, delivering the food and nourishment needed for us to survive. He is inside of the sanitation workers who keep our hospitals and care centers clean and safe. He is within our friends and family, who check in on loved ones, produce masks for those in need, and pray for the healing of our world. He is within each person who has suffered from the illness and lost their life, as Jesus, too, suffered and died. Jesus also prayed for healing. He, too, provides us with nourishment. Jesus, too, cared for the sick and healed them of their afflictions. As St. Teresa of Avila says, “Christ has no body on earth now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world; yours are the feet with which he walks to do good; yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.” “

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-Jake Bamford ‘20