

FRIENDS FOREVER!

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21; Ps. 16:1-2, 5, 7-11; Gal. 5:1, 13-18; Luke 9:51-62

This Sunday is my final day as your pastor! As it is often said, "Pastors come and go, but the people and the parish remain." The difference here is that over the years, I did not only see myself as the Pastor of this great community, but as a member of the family. It was in this vein that Ellen Chimenti and members of her Committee, in 2006, on the occasion of my Installation as pastor, inscribed on the cake, "God bless our pastor, friend, brother, and father - Fr. Anthony." By appointment to this office, to all of you, I was a Pastor; by exercising this office, to all of you I was a father; but, in relationship, to very many of you, I am a brother and a friend. As I move to another parish, I "resign" as your pastor, but not as a father to those who over the years have seen a father figure in me. As I move on, I may not be your pastor any more, but I will forever remain your brother and your friend. You should never forget that! Many of you have been parents to me and I will forever be grateful.

When I arrived in the United States in 2004, Saint Bartholomew's was the parish of my assignment. For the eight and half years I have served here, I have enjoyed every moment of it. It has been challenging - we have cried and laugh together. At times, we have been mad at each other. Sometimes, we have been disappointed in each other. But the most important thing is we always found a way to understand, tolerate and forgive each other - and we moved on. Because that is what families do! You have been my strength and support. Your love has supported me. Your faith revived me. Your endurance has encouraged me. Your generosity has challenged me. Indeed, your spirituality has uplifted me. I will forever remain grateful to you individually and collectively. Together, we were able to move our parish forward because you never stop giving of your time, talent and treasure. "Because you never stop giving (to your parish), thus, I never stop asking."

I leave you today with a heavy heart; and I am sure you will stay behind with a broken heart. But in the final analysis, you and I must not see this as a severed or broken relationship, but as a challenge that comes with our call to be Christians who must "follow Christ wherever He goes and wherever He sends us." Last Sunday, Jesus reminded His followers that, "The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." He insisted, "If anyone wishes to come after me, He must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For... whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." This is a stark reminder to us that the life of a Christian is the "life of the cross." It is a life whereby a Christian must be ready to die to self and live for others.

Thus, I reserve my heartfelt thanks to the many boys and girls, men and women, who over the years, have helped made my work much easier as I strived to serve the flock God entrusted to my care at St. Bartholomew's. From the bottom of my heart, I thank Cheryl Duda for all the time she devotes to this parish. For all our workers, who needed patience to work with a "perfectionist" like me, your days in "purgatory" are reduced significantly! Go ahead and smile! I thank Father Daniel who joined the parish family earlier this

year with much enthusiasm and zeal. Today, our youth group is growing in number and in stature because of his selfless contributions.

This Monday, Father Raphael Ezech, MSP assumes the reins as your new Pastor. I have no doubt that you will receive him with the same enthusiasm you showed me eight years ago. I ask that you continue to work with him to move this great parish forward. He has come into a great family and you must demonstrate to him that you are a caring and loving family. Meanwhile, I wish him and his Parochial Vicar, Father Daniel, a fruitful apostolate at St. Bartholomew's Parish. I pray that the good Lord will continue to enrich you the parishioners, and the priests, so that together you will be able to work to build the love and the unity that exist in this great parish.

Besides your continued faithful attendance at Mass each week, I appeal to each parishioner to seriously consider sacrificing some of your time and talent in service to the parish. The parish needs more Hospitality ministers (ushers) especially for the 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday Masses that are basically served by our young people. Should Cheryl Duda and the Pastor approach you and request you to volunteer as catechist, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Lector, Choir member, or head of a committee, please, I beg you to give such a request your prayerful consideration. We also need more men for the Holy Name Society and women for the Rosary Altar Society. Parents, grandparents and/or guardians should encourage their children to join the Parish Youth Group. Please prayerfully consider some way in which you can give something back to your parish, which has served you so well. Priests come and go, but the true strength of any parish is its people. Therefore, you all must make it work.

In today's second reading, St. Paul tells us that Christ won our freedom and set us free so that we would choose to follow Him or not. Christ won our freedom and sets us free from anger - jealousy - hatred - bigotry. He sets us free so that we might be able to deny ourselves - love God above and beyond all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. Thus, Christ's injunction, *Follow Me* requires absolute estrangement from our selfish ways, and investing our effort in building God's kingdom rather than seeking our own interest. You all will surely be missed. Take care, keep smiling and stay in touch!

Rev. Anthony Ita Bassey, MSP

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THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Wishing all of you a happy, safe Fourth of July and a summer filled with good times, good friends, good health of spirit, mind and body. On Thursday, July 4th, there will only be one Mass at 9 a.m.; and the Rectory Office will be closed.

The **ALTAR BREAD & WINE & SANCTUARY LAMP** for this week are donated Forces by the Rosary Altar Society in honor of our veterans and those serving in the Armed.



The **ALTAR CANDLES** for this week will be lit in loving memory of Christine Serricchio Bellino.

The **ALTAR FLOWERS** for this week are donated in honor of Father Anthony by his parishioners here at St. Bartholomew's Church.



CALLING ALL SENIORS! CALLING ALL SENIORS!

Join fellow seniors for a Mass and Gathering
Wednesday, July 3rd

9 a.m. Mass with a Special Blessing followed by light refreshments and gathering at the McManus Parish Center

SHARING COMMUNITY MEAL: Because of the holiday this Thursday, July 4th, we will not be preparing our Sharing Community Meal. For information on this important effort, please call the Rectory Office.



HOLY HOUR: This Friday, July 5th, is First Friday. We will have our monthly Holy Hour at 1 p.m. On Saturday, July 6th, the Divine Mercy Holy Hour will begin at 3 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to participate in these wonderful devotions.

FRIDAY, JULY 5TH

1:30 – 7:30 PM

MCMANUS PARISH CENTER

St. Bartholomew's will be conducting its 75th **Blood Drive**. St. Bart's parishioners and friends have made 5571 donations to date. Thank you to all who have participated in our past drives.

Your support is just one of many things that make St. Bartholomew's Parish special. If you can donate, please call Tony Sciacca (423-3592) for an appointment. Also, please encourage your family & friends to participate.

Registration for RELIGIOUS EDUCATION classes for public school children (1st grade through High School senior), running September through June, is open. **All Catholic children attending public schools should enroll in a religious education program.** Please call (476-6676) for more information.



✠ **STEWARDSHIP** ✉
What shall I render unto the Lord
for all his benefits to me?

TITHING - GOD'S PLAN FOR GIVING

June 24, 2012

Adults' Contribution	\$5839.60
Children's Contribution	\$32.75
Last Year's Total	\$5872.35

June 23, 2013

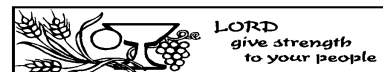
Adults' Contribution	\$5915.65
Children's Contribution	\$47.75
This Year's Total	\$5963.40

There will be a second collection next weekend at all the Masses for the maintenance of our buildings and grounds. Please be as generous as your means allow.

"The true purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe, but the tither; not the gift, but the giver; not your money, but you... for God."

REMEMBER YOUR BELOVED PARISH

Remember, "We make a living by what we earn. We make a life by what we share." Please remember our Parish in your Will as a lasting and loving gift to your parish family. Thank you!



Please pray for all the sick & the homebound members of our Parish, especially Ethel Thomas, Aldina Pereira, Rebecca Conroy, Andy DeFabritis, Maria Marte, Barbara Rup, Jule Yaskovic, Rosalie Heit, Florence B. Swetz, Clare Yaskovic, Neil Caruso, Deacon James Byrnes, Andrea Objay, Carmen Torres, Frank Marra, Deacon Patrick Troy, Josephine Apuzzo, Edith Dugan, Gary Roth, Joyann Allan, Lois Burton, Mary DeStefano, Mark Cianfagione, Shawn Colon, Margaret Maccia, Nicole Ryan Betancourt, Anthony Spinner, Audrey & Alfred Falcone, Kathleen Hayes, Marge Muraik, Stan Buoninfante, Donna Vasconez, Nicole Pisani-Frame, Louis Petrulo, Cynthia Swiatkiewicz, Jimmy Maimone, Robert Mirsky, Roseanne Mercandetti, Louis Brusco, Josephine Daniele, Jennifer Dorsey, Valerie Riccardi, Fatima Panik, Joanne Moscarello, Marian Fletcher, Anna Bonacci, Minerva Hernandez, Paula Parente, Barbara Olivieri, Bridget O'Malley, Anna Brucculeri, Peggy Clevenberg, Gerald Mazzerese, Jr., Patricia Keane, Louis Milone, Joey Bastardi, Carol Stola, Amada Ortiz, Karen Aprea, Stephen Sarich, and Neil Cawley.

2014 MASS BOOK IS OPEN

The Mass Book for 2014 opened on Ash Wednesday and there are still many dates open in this year's Mass Book, as well. Consider giving a loved one or someone (living or deceased) who has a special place in your life the graces associated with having a Mass offered on their behalf. You may have a thanksgiving Mass offered for your loved ones or for yourself on such occasions as birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc. Also, you may consider offering the altar flowers, altar bread and wine, altar candles, or sanctuary lamp for your intention. Come to the Rectory Office, **Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.** to make arrangements or to inquire about the availability of a particular date.

JUNE 30, 2013

Mass  for the
Intentions *Week*

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday, June 29 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Teresina & Luigi Pagnotta +

Sunday, June 30

8:30 AM Anna & Martin Magzag +

10:00 AM Frank & Carmela Legio +

11:30 AM For All the People of Our Parish

5:00 PM Angelina Brusco +

Monday, July 1

Weekday

7:00 AM Domenico & Emilia DiCarlo +

9:00 AM Stephen Hickey +

Tuesday, July 2

Weekday

7:00 AM Luisa Sacerdote +

9:00 AM Matt William Bachman +

Wednesday, July 3

Saint Thomas, Apostle

7:00 AM In Honor of the Holy Trinity & Holy Family

9:00 AM Antonio Marchetti +

Thursday, July 4

Weekday - Independence Day

9:00 AM Anne Marie & Francis Byrnes & Grandchildren +

Friday, July 5

Weekday

7:00 AM Deacon Bob Clemens (living)

9:00 AM Jose Angel Ocasio +

Saturday, July 6

Weekday

9:00 AM Lester Spear +

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday, July 6 (Anticipated Mass)

5:00 PM Christine Serricchio Bellino +

Sunday, July 7

8:30 AM Oscar Starckenberg +

10:00 AM Mary Ann Karpinski +

11:30 AM Susie & Vincent Streva +

5:00 PM For All the People of Our Parish

PROTECTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



This weekend we find ourselves in the midst of the Fortnight for Freedom. For two weeks our American Bishops have urged us to focus on the need of all human beings to be free to believe and act upon the belief in the decisions they make daily. Our shepherds use as the basis of their call the Scriptures in which man's dignity is stressed and Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah to "proclaim captives free." They realize that down through history the Church has fought for liberty. (We need not be reminded that when the Church failed to do that, disaster struck and the Church's identity besmirched.) Many came to our shores for the very reason that they sought the ability to follow the promptings of their conscience. From Lord Baltimore in Maryland, to Governor Dongan in New York, Catholics fought not only for their own liberation but for the free expression of others who would come to our nation's shores.

When the Second Vatican Council was called many of the attendees felt that the value of religious freedom must be expressed as a fundamental human right. The names of Spellman and Wojtya loomed large over the debate as the work of the American peritus: Father John Courtney Murray, formed the basis for the eventual document. The two bishops mentioned came of course from opposite ends of the breath of human experience. Though the former had grown up in the United States in New England free of religious coercion he knew the history of colonial banishments and witch trials which condemned the innocent. The latter still lived under the cruel regime of Communism where the State was the only reality which had followed the horrific holocaust of war set in motion by the housepainter in which millions would die because of their fidelity to God's covenant. They and their brothers stood and proclaimed for all to hear: The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. Freedom of this kind means that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power so that, within due limits, no one is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public...The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of man....This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right."

How ironic it is that all these years later the Iron Curtains and the Bamboo curtain are slowly disintegrating and Archbishop Lori must stand before us and remind all: Religious freedom protects more than the freedom to worship on Sunday; it also protects our ability to live out our faith the other six days a week." In their statement on religious liberty the American bishops recognize the erosion of our freedoms as Conscience clauses are removed from statutes, forced payments of taxes for immoral purposes, attempts to restructure religious institutions to make them more susceptible to interference, forcing catholic charitable efforts to participate in morally questionable activities or cease to exist. These are not future plans. These are present laws and administrative decisions.

Join all in prayer that what we hoped for in the past for others will return to us. Let July 4th be a celebration of basic freedom for all.

