

Dear Friends,

I hope you all are enjoying this stretch of beautiful summer weather. While the Tri-Parishes are on summer break from programs and scheduled events, I thought it would be a good time to do a three-part series of letters on where we were five years ago, how far we have come as a Tri-Parish, and before the fall arrives, what we can look forward to in the future. First, let us take a look back.

### Reflection

Five years and a half years ago, St. Edith Stein had an administrator covering the English Masses and a Cape Verdean priest assigned part-time to cover the Cape Verdean Masses and all the spiritual needs of the Cape Verdean community. Fr. Egidio dos Santos' English was very limited, and he did not have the support he needed. There was a serious disconnect between the English-speaking community and the Cape Verdean community. The parish and finance council meetings had ended when Fr. Brian Flynn transferred. People were waiting for a change.

Christ the King parish also had an administrator for an extended time and the Haitian community was being served by a part-time priest who was also assigned to a parish in Cambridge. The Life-Teen program, which had been so successful, ended when Fr. Dave O'Donnell left the parish. Many of the faithful parishioners had either moved or passed away. With an administrator in place, there was no clear plan when the parish would stabilize. There was a severe decline in attendance and the parish finances suffered as a result. The archdiocese subsidized the parish for more than a year to keep it open. Christ the King was in need of a change and a new direction.

Our Lady of Lourdes parish was in a better situation in several ways. Fr. Frank Cloherly was preparing to retire, and he had prepared the people well for the upcoming change. There were active finance and parish councils in place, and a major construction project had just been completed, including the new elevator allowing access to the church and the parish hall. Finances were in good shape as were the facilities. The parishioners were prepared for a new pastor and a new beginning.

During this time, the Archdiocese decided to group together three parishes in Dorchester with one pastor. There were added discussions about repeating this plan in other areas. It was unclear at the time, however, whether three parishes would eventually become one parish. Brockton was to become the second Tri-Parish with one pastor. It was uncertain, at that time, whether St. Patrick's would eventually be added to the Brockton Tri-Parishes.

In early May 2011, Cardinal Séan asked me to go to Brockton as pastor. On June 4th, I began to minister with the help of Fr. Carlos Suarez, who was newly ordained but fluent in Spanish and Portuguese. What a great gift he was to all of us! Needless to say, it has not been easy. Five years later, I can honestly state that it has become easier. The hard work of the staff and the continued support of all of you has made this endeavor a success. Together, we have come a long way! Thank God for the blessings and thank you for making all the effort so worthwhile.

In my next letter I will focus on how far we've come in these five-plus years.

God Bless,

*Father Joe*