

Dear Friends:

A few weeks ago I wrote a letter which was a reflection of my past five years as pastor of the Tri-Parishes. I would now like to describe the journey we have made to the present moment.

The Present State of the Tri-Parishes

Very early on, I decided the best course of action would be to keep the three parishes separate so that the distinct needs and finances would not get in the way of the parish communities working together. In the first year, each of the parishes had their own finance person, however, in order to be more efficient; we needed one business manager for the three parishes. Anne Andrea was hired, and we began setting budgets and sticking with them. At this time, I am happy to report that all three parishes are current with their bills.

Within a few months, we were able to establish a predictable Tri-Parish Mass schedule. I also decided that we would benefit from one parish council as well as one finance council with representatives from the three parishes. Both councils meet on a regular basis and help us all stay focused on the business at hand.

The staff of the Tri-Parishes has monthly meetings to plan events and to work collaboratively. There have been a few changes on the staff. Fr. Egidio, of the Cape Verdean Community, returned to Cape Verde, and we were blessed to have with us Fr. Irinue who celebrates Mass in Portuguese and English. Fr. Garcia is now with us full-time celebrating Masses in French and English. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Fr. Carlos who is now doing full-time vocational work. We also added a new music director at St. Edith Stein; Jack Colombo, who is doing a great job of building up our music program.

With the support of our faithful parishioners, each of the three parishes has had significant improvements to our facilities:

Christ the King: Sold the former rectory to a trustee of Trinity Catholic Academy, who is renting it out to Stonehill College. This fall, ten recent grads will live there while giving a year of service in the surrounding community. The proceeds from the house have allowed us to re-point the second half of the church and plaster all the problems in the interior walls. Recently, we gave the youth group a new gathering space and a beautiful chapel has been created for daily Mass.

Our Lady of Lourdes: New front doors have been installed, and a new bathroom has been built in the front entryway of the church. The kitchen has been remodeled, and two new classrooms have been added to the lower level. We converted the former rectory into the Faith Formation Center with ten new classrooms. Due to a burst pipe, we have a new sound system, reconciliation room, and sacristy. Just this month, we finally had the interior of the church painted. It looks beautiful! We also had extensive landscaping work done both in front of the church and in the side yard with newly refinished Stations of the Cross.

Saint Edith Stein: The most extensive renovation happened at St. Edith Stein. The Cape Verdean men volunteered to build a chapel, a conference room, a handicapped bathroom, and kitchen. After they had completed their work, a new tiled floor was installed in the large hall along with a new projector, and large screen. In the upper Church, we now have a newly refurbished pipe organ, hardwood floor in the sanctuary, and carpeting in the aisles. Outside, we have a new irrigation system to water the beautiful landscaping which was a generous gift from a lovely couple.

Regarding our programs: we have also made some changes. We have religious education classes for grades 1 & 2 at all three parishes. Grades 3-10 are at St. Edith Stein and Our Lady of Lourdes. Several years ago, Sr. Anne began to offer a program for children who missed out on regular classes in faith formation. We also have the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program for all three parishes which is fantastic! For the last four years, we have had some wonderful seminarians with us, who have added to the life of the Church here in Brockton. The missions we have had these last few years have brought the Anglo, the Cape Verdean, and Haitian communities together. We are one people of faith!

I realize that this letter is long, but the information is important. It seems to me, that what has been accomplished in these last five years is amazing! Your commitment to your faith and your support has allowed our Tri-Parish to flourish. Thank you for being part of God's family. May the Lord continue to bless us and the important work we are doing together.

My final letter in this series will include information regarding the pastoral plan; which includes every parish in the archdiocese. How will our Tri-Parish fit into the plan will be explained as well as ideas for future development and growth.

God bless you.

Fr. Joe