

Companions on the Journey

April 25, 2021

Dear Friends,

In last week's column I spelled out the ramifications and implications of my celebrating my 74th birthday on April 15th. I must say that I have been the recipient of a good number of birthday cards, emails, texts and donations to my future retirement fund, various food items (all extremely low in calories—cashews, almonds, pistachios, walnuts, various chocolates, birthday cake, kielbasa, etc.) My poor Noom subscription is certainly being put to the test these past two weeks. And then there was the singing of happy birthday by those participating in the 8:15 daily Mass on the 15th. Everyone was in good voice.

I am most grateful to all of you who took the time to wish me birthday greetings and for the very kind comments you made of me as your pastor. They were and are humbling to me. In June I will complete thirty years as pastor here at Saint Anthony's and I promise to do all in my power to have Saint Anthony's in the very best shape—spiritually, pastorally, administratively, financially—that I possibly can. Of course, that can only happen with your ongoing assistance. And I have come to know that such support is always forthcoming and I am able to rely on all manner of support from you.

Saint Anthony's is 135 years old. That is a much longer run than most parishes have. There is no reason why our parish cannot continue for many more years—serving, living the faith, celebrating God's goodness, helping those in need, standing up for the truth of the gospel, witnessing to our culture what believers in Jesus stand for today, giving God the worship of our hearts on the Lord's Day. Thank you for your acceptance of my leadership over these years. Please know that your own faith has been a great inspiration to me. There are so many things you do, so many ways you step up to be counted on, so many people you help whom you do not know, have never met and probably never will. You make the gift of yourself—in terms of time and money and expertise.

It is my fondest hope that all will be able—and very soon—to return to Eucharist. That we will be able to share the chalice of the Lord's Precious Blood, bring up the gifts of bread and wine, extend to each other the sign of peace, have our holy water fonts filled again with the holy water recalling our baptisms. I yearn for parish social events where we can just be ourselves and enjoy each other's company without fear or danger of contamination. Let us pray for that day to arrive very soon. I long to share those moments with all of you. Thank you for hanging in.

**In the Peace of Christ,
Msgr. McHenry**