



St. Mary-St. Catherine of Siena  
Roman Catholic Parish

November 17, 2020

[WWW.STMARYSTCATHERINE.ORG](http://WWW.STMARYSTCATHERINE.ORG)

Dear Parishioner,

As I look out over the masked congregation at Mass, each person or family seated socially distanced from others, I am so grateful that our Parish is alive and moving forward even with all of the restrictions in place. Everything has changed and every one of you has been working hard to face the challenges these changes present. This is so for our Parish ministries as well.

Not long after the lock down that included the closing of churches, we began live-streaming daily and Sunday Masses and moved to virtual Religious Education and Faith Formation Classes. Since churches were closed, funerals for loved ones, many for whom were victims of the virus, were limited to graveside services only. We did our best to comfort the families and to personalize the Rite of Burial.

Once we were able to reopen our Church, we worked with a core of parishioners to implement the protocols necessary to keep everyone in attendance as safe as possible. This enabled us to resume celebrating funerals, weddings, baptisms, Confirmations and First Communions, albeit with limited numbers present because of the need to social distance.

As one would expect, the numbers of Charlestown families facing food insecurity has increased during this time. Because of the ongoing generosity of our Parish and the Charlestown community, our emergency food pantry, Harvest on Vine, has been able to provide food for twice the number of families on a biweekly basis.

The pandemic caused a bit of a delay in the restoration and re-painting of the Church, but I am happy to say the work is completed and the results are beyond magnificent!

I recognize and am grateful to the many of you who have done your best to continue to support the Parish. Yet, our offertory income has dipped 17% (full budget details are available on our website) while our ongoing expenses have remained stable. And so I write to you, as I do every year at this time, to ask for your financial assistance by making a generous donation to our Grand Annual Collection. This is a once a year effort to balance our budget. Please know that your gift is needed and will be deeply appreciated.

I'm keenly aware that everyone's circumstances are unique and many have been impacted negatively in these times. If everyone does whatever is possible, I am certain our Parish will continue to thrive.

Yes, the pandemic has wreaked havoc in so many ways, yet the enduring Love of God for each of us seems more palpable now than ever and is so richly evident in the good will of so many during these trying times.

This month, I am completing 16 years as pastor, the longest time I have served in any ministry. What a blessing it is for me that these have been the best 16 years of my life! I am deeply grateful to God for these years as a priest here in Charlestown and to all of you for your ongoing, loving support.

In Christ's peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Ronan', written over a white background.

Fr. Ronan

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