

October 2015

Dear Parishioners and Friends of the Church of the Transfiguration,

I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit to Munich, Salzburg, Montreux and Zurich visiting several friends including Marianne Schenk in Zurich. I preached for my friend and former colleague at Holy Trinity East 88th Street, Father Steve Smith, at his parish, Ascension, Munich on one of the Sundays. It was impressive to witness the response of the congregation there to the current refugee crisis. I personally witnessed huge numbers of refugees from Syria in particular at the rail stations in Salzburg, Austria, and in Freilassing, Germany. Despite the numbers of people involved there did seem to be some sense of order as refugees were being processed by officials, fed and cared for, and taken on buses to further destinations. I spoke in a sermon recently of the young Austrian woman with purple hair, sitting on the rail station concourse in Salzburg, teaching a crowd of teenager refugees some basic German with the aid of pictures. Outside the Salzburg station I noted a sign on a building saying “Salzburg welcomes refugees.” So amidst all the signs of human tragedy there were signs of hope. The response of the German government in particular has been admirable.

I returned to the parish at a busy time as the Fall Season gets underway. Last Saturday for instance we had a very happy Blessing of the Animals in the courtyard followed by two weddings. The first wedding was of our own church warden, Paul Cardozo, to his partner, Jeff Buggini. Then last Sunday was our 167th Foundation Festival with a delicious parish luncheon following the Solemn Mass. At the service we rededicated the beautifully restored Mary Shrine in the Transept. This was funded through a generous donation. It was remarkable how the restoration artist carefully scraped back the various layers of paint to find the original designs which he was then able to replicate.

This coming Saturday, October 10, from 10am – 4pm, we are having a Bazaar in the courtyard. Already we have received many donations of treasures to be sold. The funds will go towards our outreach programs.

On Sunday October 11 we will be having our first Mass for All Ages for the new season at which we look forward to welcoming back the Girls' and Cherub Choirs. It was good to welcome back the Men and Boys' Choir at the end of September.

October/November is pledge season as we prepare for 2016 budget year. We will focus on stewardship from Sunday October 18 until Pledge Sunday on November 15. **I am delighted that our friend, Canon George Brandt, has accepted my invitation to launch the annual pledge campaign on Sunday October 18.** We look forward to welcoming him back to the parish. A separate mailing with the pledge brochure will be sent out shortly.

We were sad to farewell Anna and Aaron Jones and their daughter, Amelia, recently as they have moved to New Hampshire. They made a significant contribution to the parish through their musical gifts and Aaron served on the vestry for a time. We will miss them. But God is good to us and we have gained several new parishioners over the summer. I encourage you all to reach out in welcome to those you do not know or have not seen before.

The major restoration of the foundations of the church and chapel are almost complete and the south wall project is well underway. While the foundation restoration is not visible to most of us I can assure you that a huge amount of work has been done over the past 3 months as much earth has been excavated and removed to open up the space, the brick supporting columns have been strengthened and rebuilt in some instances, and steel beams added to the original timber ones. While this work is not very exciting you will all understand it is vital to the healthy future of the building. I was conscious of this on Foundation Sunday! With regard to the South Wall project including the 8 stained glass windows I am pleased to report that we have had excellent response thus far to the fundraising challenge. I cannot wait to see the completed project!

On the weekend of October 17/18 we are once again participating in Open House New York when the main sanctuary is open for visitors all weekend. Elizabeth Carr has again arranged a series of special tours, concerts and talks to make this a very special annual event. Parishioners are most welcome to help greet visitors on either day.

I trust we all enjoy the beautiful Fall weather and the changing colors in the foliage.

With my loving and prayerful good wishes and blessings,

Rector