

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we make final preparations for next weekend's celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the founding of St. James Parish I am drawn to consider our parish's wonderful history.

How delighted I am that I was here for the celebration of our 60th Anniversary! I recall that at least two busloads of parishioners traveled out to the Church of St. Peter & Paul in Manorville to celebrate Mass in what was our "chicken coop," the first worship space of our parish. A good number of the people who joined us that day were long time parishioners of St. James. Some were even founding members. We returned to St. James' Delaney Hall for a buffet dinner to cap off the day's celebration.

It was a great introduction to our parish for me as I was still getting my feet wet and trying to learn about the history of our parish and the wonderful work that was accomplished over those sixty years. People had memories that they shared with me of Msgr. Delaney and the early days followed by the contributions of each of our subsequent pastors and the associates who served here.

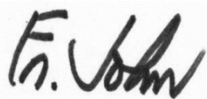
The Sisters of the Cross and Passion arrived at St. James in 1957 to create a catechetical center for the over 2,000 children in need of religious instruction. Mother Concepta, Sister Margaret Mary Laffey, Sister Ellen Downes and Sister Peter Joseph, along with volunteer catechists established the Confraternity Program. Sister St. Gerard arrived to conduct a special education program, along with adult conversion classes. Sister Rosemary Traynor ran our Religious Education Program for many years after she left teaching in our school.

September of 1961 was the opening of our parish school, which educated many of the children of our parish until 1992. On many occasions someone will approach me to let me know that they attended and/or graduated from St. James.

Our humble beginnings started in a chicken coop for the celebration of Mass and the other Sacraments. Then came the building of the "big church" just off Hicksville Road. Of note, I came to St. James before I was ordained a priest for the wedding of a friend of mine. The reception was held at present day Chapey's, which was the Knights of Columbus Hall at the time. Little did I realize that I would return here to St. James someday to serve as your pastor, which has been a true blessing for me for the past eleven years.

We will be celebrating the 70th Anniversary at all the Masses next weekend. On Sunday, October 10th, the actual anniversary date of our founding, we will have a special concelebrated Mass at 12:00 Noon with Bishop Richard Henning. Several of our previous pastors, associates and deacons will join us that day. A luncheon will follow in Delaney Hall on the lower level of the parish center. A limited number of free tickets are available at the parish center during regular business hours.

Whichever Mass you attend next weekend, let's pray for each other, for the founding members of our parish and for all those who contributed to the building up of our wonderful parish over the past seventy years. May those who will come to St. James Parish in the future look back with a similar sense of fondness that we feel for those who came before us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. John". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.