



August 8, 2020

Dear friends of God,

After consulting our liturgy committee and a variety of parishioners, it has been decided to change our Weekend Mass schedule. Beginning the weekend of September 12/13, we will no longer be celebrating the 10:30 a.m. Mass and our Sunday Mass will be at 9:00 a.m. Therefore, our weekend schedule will be 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday. When I was coming to our parish, this change had been part of the discussion by parish leadership. I postponed it for a year to get a feel for our parish. After much discernment and conversation, this still seems to be the right decision for us. I believe that we will become an even more vibrant worshipping community as we come together as Holy Trinity Parish. I ask that you be patient during this time of transition.

I have a friend who struggled with faith when she was a young adult. She had significant doubts about God's existence. When she went to church, it was because she was forced to attend by her minister mother. She sat defiantly in the pew and told God that she did not believe in Him. She would even scream telling God that she did not believe he existed even though no one sitting in the pews could hear her screams. I think that we have made a mistake in thinking that doubt is a bad thing. We might think of the Apostle known as doubting Thomas and believe that doubt is something to be avoided at all cost. The truth is that faith is a gift and sometimes we don't know what to do with that Divine present and Presence. We might be standing in Church when we proclaim our faith, our doubting and struggling faith and wonder what it means when we say in the Apostles Creed, "I believe in God..." As we grow in our relationship with God, doubt is a very normal part of that process. It is an important part of claiming faith as our own and to leave childish notions about God behind us.

Those of you who are married or in committed relationships know the ideas that you had about marriage are likely quite different from the reality that you have experienced in your life. We have sold ourselves on fairy tale notions of marriage. "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams" (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*). As we grow in faith and in our relationships, we need to move beyond naive visions of the world. To have an adult faith means moving beyond our ideas about God that we had as children. We need to begin to understand that God isn't an old man with a beard in the sky. He is more than we can ever imagine. We have cluttered our minds with idols that we call God. Trappist Father Thomas Merton years ago suggested something that remains essential for our time: "The greatest need of our time is to clean out the enormous mass of mental and emotional rubbish that clutters our minds." Doubt can be our friend as we let go of the rubbish that we carry with us as we grow in relationship with God: the one whom we might doubt and struggle with but the One who never loses faith in us. God invites us to have courage even when we doubt or struggle with where our lives are headed.

In our Gospel from Matthew this weekend, we will hear about the disciples being tossed in the water and Peter attempting to walk towards Jesus on the water and how Peter falters. He was struggling and asked the Lord to help him in his doubt. We might feel like that when we are frightened in following the Lord. We don't always see things as they are and the direction in which we are moving. We simply need to learn to be in the present moment. Thomas Merton might help us when he wrote, "You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope."

Together let us embrace the present moment, sit with our doubt and fears and grow in faith that even though we doubt, God is always in our midst even when we struggle to believe.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fr. Ken" with a stylized flourish at the end.