

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I hope that you had a wonderful summer in spite of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The cold breeze is here and that means.....Autumn!

Falling leaves and a rainbow of colors to decorate our surroundings! BEAUTY! It is one of my favorite times of the year. It represents change, new energy and spirit. During this time of the year, I usually would find time to drive to the mountains to feel this moment. I hope that these beautiful colors in our surroundings will help brighten our days from the darkness of this Coronavirus. Driving around is the one thing I always like to keep as part of my Advent preparations. Yes there are some things that we want to keep. I would like to share with you this wonderful reflection from an unknown author. The title of the reflection is SOME THINGS YOU KEEP....

Like good teeth---warm coats---bald husbands. They are good for you, reliable and practical and so sublime that to throw them away would make the garbage person a thief. So hang on, because something old is sometimes new, and what you know is better than a stranger.

These are my thoughts, they make me sound old, old and tame, and dull at a time when everybody else is risky and racy and flashing all that's new and improved in their lives. New careers, new thighs, new lips, new cars! The world is dizzy with trade-ins. I could keep track, but I don't I want to.

I grew up in the sixties with practical parents---a mother, God bless her, who washed aluminum foil after she cooked in it, then reused it--- and still does it. Sounds familiar? A father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones. They weren't poor, my parents, they were satisfied.

Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers and tee shirt and Mom in a housedress, lawnmower in one's hand, dishtowel in the others. It was a time of fixing things----a curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress.

Things you keep. It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, reheating, renewing---- I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant there'd always be more.

But then my father died, and on that clear autumn night, in the chill of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain learning that sometimes there isn't any "more." Sometimes what you care about most gets all used up and goes away, never to return.

So, while you have it, it's best to love it and care for it and fix it when it's broken and heal it when it's sick. That's true for marriage and old cars and children with bad report cards and dogs with bad hips and aging parents. You keep them because they're worth it, because you're worth it.

Some things you keep! Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate you grew up with. There are just some things that make life important people you know are special....and you KEEP them close!

I hope that this will give us inspiration in our endless search for the meaning of life especially during this time of Coronavirus pandemic.

Last Friday we had a very memorable and historical Oktoberfest Concert. And then the following day, Saturday, October 10, we gathered for our Oktoberfest Outdoor mass.

I would like to thank the many people that helped me put this together this two-day event: Michael Chio, Ricky de los Reyes, Eric Fernandez, Myrtle Dawana, Aura Mendieta and the Parish Staff, Natalie Lenz-Acuna and the staff and parents of the school and many dedicated volunteers of our St. Joseph Community. Special thanks to all the singers and performers who gave their hearts and their souls during that night. I don't want to forget also our business and family/individual sponsors. Thank you thank you!

This was done to honor those who have worked so hard through the years to make the Oktoberfest gathering a great success, year in and year out! We will not allow this pandemic to stop us from celebrating. No one and nothing can stop us from the love of God.

As you have already heard from me, our reopening will be on the weekend of All Saints Day, October 31 and November 1.

This is the schedule for our indoor reopening of the church.

SATURDAY:

4:30pm----- Blessing of the New Doors

5pm-----English Mass

SUNDAY:

8am-----English Mass

10am----- English Mass livestream on YouTube and Facebook

12nn-----Outdoor Mass in the School Yard

1pm-----Communion in the church for those who attended the 10am livestream mass

5:30pm-----English Mass

Your cooperation is very important! Please follow the instructions of our ushers. Following the guidelines of the Contra Costa Council and of our diocese, we will make sure that we practice social distancing. This means that we cannot sit to wherever we want to sit. They will take you to your place. There will be protocols to follow. That's why it is important that we follow the procedures and guidelines that we put together. Please be patient and be understanding. Always wear your mask and sanitize your hands. There will be challenges when we reopen. Again I would like to thank you all for your generous gift to our parish community.

Please check our website: sjcpinole.church---- for updates and information. And please share this information with your friends, family and neighbors!

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Geoffrey.