

August 15, 2014

*My dear Parishioners,*

*Our parish of St. Mary, Star of the Sea, has been established on this sacred place since this date in 1874; we celebrated our Centennial as a parish on August 15, 1974. At that time, though some of us remember it, many of us did not yet live in Astoria, or maybe were not even born yet. It is amazing that we are continuing the mission of this parish each day, just as many people did decades ago. Look around us: the church structure, the bell tower, the dome of the sanctuary, the crucifix, the statues, St. Mary, St. Joseph, the stations of the cross; and even the pews that we sit on and pray in - which even creak with the weight of all those people over the years. Look around at all the stained glass windows, which were crafted so long ago to bring us the wonderful beauty of art, whose story we do not know. Think of the voices of all of those who came before us who prayed, sang, and received the Eucharist so faithfully, for so long. It makes us feel small and yet full of responsibility to continue the traditions that they started.*

*In this holy place, we have the footprints of the priests, the religious sisters, the parishioners involved in so many things: care of the sacristy and altar decoration, the Eucharistic ministers, the greeters and ushers, CCD teachers; think of all who were baptized and married here, and were buried from this church, surrounded by their community. And why? Because they were all touched the place and community that has been and is alive and caring now. All have made an imprint on this place and in these hearts; they are all here in spirit with us, urging us to continue what they began. We appreciate their gifts left behind for us to enjoy and build upon. They did all these things to give us our identity and prepare our youth today. This holy church invites us to be the heir of the legacy of faith so that we can carry it forward through the years as our membership grows ever new. And, it humbles me to think of all my brother priests I follow, who worked alongside the parishioners to build up the life of the parish; all of you have likewise done the same.*

*Yes, on this very day, Archbishop Cornelius M. Power came to this parish forty years ago to celebrate 100 years of Christian life along with the pastor Father Charles Borho and all who made up this parish. We celebrate in a modest way today, the holy relic this church building has become, and the faithful way we all strive to carry on. After all these years, this church is still here through the memory and efforts of many. For us, we continue to write the story of our lives and the Christian presence in the north coast. You and I pick up the story as our own today, and our life together steps forward with our story. I encourage all of us to be proud of our wonderful home and know that Our Mother, Mary, is our star which can be seen as a sign of good in a world often visited by danger and difficult times. Holy Mary, pray for us.*

*Happy One Hundred and Fortieth Anniversary of our parish, 1874 - 2014!*

*Father John*