

Twenty-five Years!

On January 21, 1988 Bishop John R. McGann officially established the Parish of the Holy Cross. The surrounding parishes, especially St. Joseph in Ronkonkoma and St. Patrick in Smithtown, were very large. Actually three parishes were established that day. The other two were St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Lake Ronkonkoma and Resurrection in Farmingville. As we celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary today, we offer prayers and blessings to Msgr. Dan Picciano and Father Malcolm Burns and their parishioners.

We have been very blessed these twenty-five years. Today we stand on the shoulders of many wonderful people who were part of the beginnings of Holy Cross and who have been faithful stewards of God's grace over the years. Some have returned to the Lord, and we ask the blessings of peace upon them. Some have moved away, and we ask God to watch over them today. Gratitude is an appropriate response for so much goodness.

I am particularly pleased that Father Joe and Father Bill are joining us for the 11:30 Mass today. Bishop McGann chose wisely when he made them co-pastors of Holy Cross. They brought vision and enthusiasm to this newly forming community. They gathered people with a sense of welcome that lasts to this day. I am very blessed to benefit from the fruits of their labors.

Father Bob Thelen and Father John Sureau are also concelebrating our anniversary Mass. One is a lifelong friend who assists here on Sundays; the other is a new treasure in my life as a result of my being an interim Vicar last semester. Aren't we fortunate to have these two good priests with us?

Speaking of being fortunate, I wish to acknowledge Father Harold Buckley who is responsible for so much of the beautiful sculpture, including the welcoming Christ and the Cross over the Altar. May God bless him in Florida. I hold Father Ed Zogby close to my heart today. Father Ed and I knew each other when I was a 16 year old seminarian through Msgr. Dan Dougherty who was a spiritual guide to us. May Father Ed enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven today as we enjoyed the fruits of his wisdom on Sundays for so many years.

There are many others who could be remembered today, but I will single out Sister Marion Snow who died soon after I came. Sister Marion brought the heart of a truly Religious woman to every aspect of our parish. May she rest in peace.



We are very blessed to have Bishop William Murphy celebrate our Mass today. I first met Bishop Murphy when I began work in Rome at the North American College over thirty years ago. I arrived there soon after the death of my dad, and Bishop Murphy was singular in his kindness to me. All these years later, he is our Bishop and he continues to be singular in his kindness to me. Welcome Bishop Murphy; you are most welcome here as is Msgr. Bob Morrissey whom I knew as a seminarian thirty-five years ago!

Today is a day to remember the past with gratitude, to live this moment with enthusiasm, and to look to the future with hope. With much gratitude and love,

Father Jim