

Fr. Robin Dodge's Charge to the Parish
The Church of the Holy Faith Annual Meeting
31 January 2021

2020 was quite the year! It required a lot of creativity, ingenuity, and prayer to maintain, adapt, and enhance the worship, ministry, and outreach of Holy Faith. This was all made possible by your ideas, your support, and your faith to sustain Holy Faith.

2020 started normally enough. We were trying some innovative things. We held a glorious evening Candlemas service on the Feast of the Presentation attended by a goodly number despite it being Super Bowl Sunday. We observed a holy start to Lent with meaningful Ash Wednesday services. And then we moved into Lent with an engaging video series presented by the monks of the Cowley Father on the important symbols of the church.

Then the pandemic hit and everything changed. During the second Wednesday Lent gathering, the clergy, staff, and Vestry leadership were called away for an emergency diocesan-wide Zoom call with the bishop. Little did we realize then that Zoom would be our new way of life! In order to love God and love our neighbor, as we hear each week in the Summary of the Law, we were told that we could continue to offer liturgies, but there could be no in-person worship.

Between that Wednesday and the following Sunday, we had to scramble to transform Holy Faith into a soundstage to broadcast livestreams of the liturgies. Much of the brunt of the responsibility fell on the staff to make this transformation. Mark Childers secured the audio and video equipment necessary for a clear picture and good sound, as well as bringing carpets and cushions into the nave to lessen the echo of a

cavernous space with no congregation. Donna Lukacs obtained a YouTube account for the parish and came in on Sundays to try to avoid glitches with the livestream and to upload the recording to the Holy Faith YouTube channel. Section leaders of the choir took turns as cantors for the services. Fr. Jim and I had to get our heads around celebrating the Eucharist with no congregation, preaching to a camera, and missing the look in your faces for reactions and the connection of putting the Sacrament in your outstretched hands. Marcos Castillo and Rocio Salazar were faithful in their cleaning the premises after each use and getting everything ready for next time. My deepest thanks go to this wonderful staff that kept everything together and moving forward this past year!

What we thought would be a short-term disruption ending before Easter turned out to be something much more ominous that is still with us. We had to figure out how to offer a meaningful Holy Week and how to celebrate Easter, then Pentecost, then Independence Day, then the Feast of St. Mary, our patronal feast, All Saints' Day, Christ the King, Christmas, and Epiphany. You gave great feedback and so we tweaked things along the way. More mics were installed. Additional cameras were added and zoom features were used thanks to Cameraman Ken Duran. A new sound system was installed with the help of a generous donor. Volume and balance levels were adjusted. A new loop mic for the organ was secured thanks to Mark. And so we now have an excellent quality broadcast of the Holy Faith liturgies that I encourage you to tune in to, as many do across the country, as we welcome new parishioners and reconnect with former parishioners who have moved away but still have a love for Holy Faith. I am

amazed at how many people have moved to Santa Fe during the pandemic and have become members of Holy Faith because of our online presence.

Holy Faith's other worship opportunities and ministries continued and thrived, mostly via Zoom that allows more people to participate. Thanks to the untiring efforts of outgoing Senior Warden Guy Gronquist, who has hosted weekday Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer via Zoom and has prepared all the needed Orders of Service, more than 5000 people have attended the Daily Offices since Easter. That, by the way, is more than the number who usually would show up in person! Thank you, Guy!

Evening Bible Study, Men's Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, and the Spiritual Classics discussion all continued via Zoom, with increased participation especially by Holy Faith parishioners who live in Santa Fe only part-time. The Daughters of the King, the Men's Lunch, and other groups and committees have been able to meet online to enjoy fellowship and further their work. The Library Committee has still been able to sponsor two Library Talks and host the annual Scheffler Lecture via Zoom. Each of these groups and committees have played a vital role in maintaining community and connectedness within the parish in the midst of this pandemic, and Fr. Jim has spearheaded the effort to ensure that the pastoral needs of the parish are met, along with the good offices of Faith Family and Faith Friends.

Ministry to the youngest members of the parish has been enhanced. After the creation of a Children's and Youth Ministry Task Force following last year's annual meeting, Janet McCroskey and Kathlene Ritch in the fall revived Children's Chapel via Zoom. In addition, Janet has ensured that the youngsters received worksheets, craft projects, and treats for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The crowning achievement

was the lovely, recorded, socially distanced Christmas pageant by the children organized by Kathlene and Janet that can still be viewed on Holy Faith's YouTube channel. For the youth, Thérèse Saint-Andre and Pam Jones lead a Sunday morning book discussion on the Narnia Chronicles, also via Zoom. Thank you Janet, Kathlene, Thérèse, and Pam!

Holy Faith's commitment to serve the needy in the community has continued uninterrupted. The Mission & Outreach Committee was able to award its grants in the spring and is currently reviewing applications for this grant cycle. The feeding ministry that goes into action the fourth Sunday of each month has found innovative ways to socially distance and still prepare nutritious lunches for distribution from the Interfaith Community Shelter at Pete's Place. Holy Faith parishioners have continued to volunteer at Pete's Place, and Holy Faith opened its kitchen to the wonderful chefs who participated in the Interfaith Community Shelter's annual fundraiser "Chefscapades," although in a virtual format this year. Another innovative fundraiser was Holy Faith's Women's Guild turning the 137th annual St. Nicholas Bazaar into an online event to raise money for the neediest in our community. Congratulations on your ingenuity and creativity!

Supporting, encouraging, promoting, and monitoring all these opportunities for worship, ministry, and outreach has been the Holy Faith Vestry. This dedicated group of individuals has worked tirelessly this past year to ensure that Holy Faith would thrive despite the pandemic. The Vestry worked diligently to follow the diocesan protocol to come up with a plan to resume in-person worship, which we were able to do for a few weeks in the autumn until the spike in coronavirus cases caused the bishop to close

churches until their counties return to the green level as determined by the New Mexico Department of Health. Although we regret losing Heidi Hahn, Junior Warden Paul D'Arcy, and Senior Warden Guy Gronquist, whose terms expire, we look forward to the new Vestry members Steven Berkshire, Vann Bynum, and Chris Frenk joining continuing Vestry members Charles Chambers, Dan Green, Leslea McCabe, Charles Rountree, Walter Sterling, Van Swift, and myself. Well done, Vestry!

We have had to say goodbye in this past year, but we have also been able to say hello. We bade farewell to Mother Pam Graham as she retired, but we welcome Mother Madelynn Johnston as Assisting Priest. We have been able also to welcome a number of newcomers to the parish but we have said goodbye to parishioners who moved away or who have died, especially remembering our faithful Assisting Priest, Fr. Richard Murphy. In a Zoom gathering last Sunday, we delighted in stories from his youth, his seminary days, his ministry, and his impact on our lives. We will miss him, but I am pleased to tell you today that the Vestry has designated the newly-renovated chapel sacristy, where Fr. Murphy so familiarly presided over the weekday Eucharists, to the Glory of God and in Thanksgiving for the Ministry of the Rev'd Dr. Richard Murphy.

The impetus for this dedication came from outgoing Junior Warden Paul D'Arcy who oversaw the renovation of the chapel sacristy, as well as the tuck-pointing of the church, the reconfiguration of the Memorial Garden, and the installation of new audio visual equipment in Palen Hall and the sound system in the nave that has helped immensely with the quality of the live-streaming. Thank you, Paul, for a job well done.

All these capital improvements were made possible because of the Holy Faith Endowment Fund, generous donors over the years, and careful oversight by the Investment Committee, currently chaired by Peter Lockyer. With the formation of the Operations Endowment Fund in 2020, parishioners have a choice in designating operating expenditures as well as capital expenses and mission & outreach to benefit from their planned giving, and all parishioners are encouraged to consider Holy Faith in their estate planning.

Your generosity also enabled Holy Faith to end the year in the black despite the pandemic. At last year's Annual Meeting, the Vestry presented a budget forecasting a deficit, something neither I, nor the Vestry, wanted to continue. At that time, I urged those who had not made a pledge to do so and for those who had already made a pledge to pray about increasing it. Because of your stepping up to the plate (no pun intended), fiduciary stewardship of the parish's resources by the Finance Committee and Vestry, careful monitoring of the budget by Treasurer Steven Berkshire (thank you, Steven), and many of you prepaying this year's pledge, Holy Faith ended 2020 with a net gain and is well poised to face whatever 2021 may bring. Because of your faith and Holy Faith, the theme of this year's stewardship campaign that highlights the two touchstones that are seeing us through this pandemic, the Vestry this year is able to present a balanced budget predicated on the desire to reopen the church as soon as practicable.

While some may not want to return to church right away, and I understand that, Holy Faith will not abandon you; we will continue to livestream the Sunday Eucharists. But I also know many of you are longing to return to worship in person, and that's what

Fr. Jim and I want because we miss seeing you, we miss engaging with you, we miss connecting with you at the altar rail. And that's where you all come in. We can't return to in-person worship until the infection rate and positive test rate for Covid-19 in Santa Fe county come down. Remember our duty is to love God and love our neighbor, and we can do both by worshiping online and not endangering one another's health by gathering in large numbers. But here's my charge to you:

First, be sure to register and get vaccinated for the coronavirus. The sooner we have herd immunity in Santa Fe, the sooner we will be able to resume in-person worship.

Second, until we can come back together, check on your fellow parishioners. Reach out and call someone you miss seeing. Contact someone you know who lives alone. And if any of you need anything, please call. Holy Faith is here for you.

Third, when it is safe to do so, come home to Holy Faith; come home to Holy Faith with your enthusiasm, come home to Holy Faith with your energy, come home to Holy Faith with your love, so that Holy Faith continues as it always has - a place to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, a place where the presence of the Holy Spirit is palpable, a place to receive the love of Christ, and a place that everyone who crosses the threshold wants to become part of and involved.

Finally, keep your faith and keep Holy Faith in your prayers.

I love being your rector! I love you! I love Holy Faith! God bless you all!