

St. Joseph Church

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Mancini Minute

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In talking with parishioners from the deanery parishes I heard that the Ash Wednesday services this year were jammed pack at both the masses and the ash services. A similar occurrence happened during Desert Storm when many of our service personnel in the military were sent overseas. Suddenly we became aware that we were in danger over situations we could not control. Then we asked, "Where would the terrorists attack next?" Now we ask, "Are we going to be thrown into financial panic tomorrow?" The insulation around our comfort zone has disappeared.

Are we being punished for past and present sins? Were the warnings and petitions the Blessed Mother gave at Fatima so ignored that the Lord is letting us suffer the consequences of such neglect? The Catholic Church has suffered from scandalous abuse by the clergy and by Catholic politicians who are more political than they are Catholic. The secular world has spread its philosophy about material wealth, success, casual sex, greed, than the Church has in its message of salvation about being created for a world beyond this planet. We say we believe in peace rather than violence, in harmony more than competition, in helping our neighbor rather than selfishness; but what is reflected in our daily living? The divorce and abortion rates are similar for Christians and pagans. More prisons are needed every year.

I see a sign of hope in the good attendance at the beginning of a penitential season. The Holy Spirit has touched us on a very sore spot but one that called for our attention. Repentance and conversion have always been the call to come back to the gospel. And the wonderful thing is that God stands ready to receive us again. It has been the sad story of Christianity that there are waves of conversion then self indulgence that make repentance necessary again.

We will repeat Lent next year if the Lord gives us a next year. We have the present time. The Scriptures tell us, "Now is the time of salvation." The beginning has been good. May we continue in God's grace.

Msgr Mancini