

Hello everybody,

Happy New Year! That traditional greeting seems a little over enthusiastic for the start of 2021, but I really want it to be true. I deeply desire for 2021 to be a happy year and I am hopeful that may be the case for us all. I am perhaps a bit more subdued and my actual feeling is more of relief that 2020 has ended. Years ago, after having journeyed through Lent somberly, without singing the Gloria at Mass, we were celebrating the resurrection of Jesus and singing loudly and joyously the Gloria. In the pause after it had finished, in the silence before the next word was said, a four year old near the front exclaimed in a voice loud enough for all in the church to hear, "Thank God that's over!" We all laughed, but for 2020, that sentiment seems about right. Thank God that's over.

I'm thankful, too, that my surgery is past and recovery continues. Surgery was successful and my progress, though slow, is moving forward. I am doing better than expected and I continue physical therapy (a challenge for which I am grateful). I will go back to the doctor on January 14 with x-rays to see if the fusion and bone growth have been successful. I am still quite limited for lifting, bending, and twisting, my stamina drains quickly, and I have numbness and limited movement in my left foot. Some movement and strength have returned in the past week to my left foot and it encourages me as I work on physical therapy. I expect to begin returning to some ministry over the coming weeks. It's a challenge to get back to doing only some things when I want to get back to doing everything. I cannot fully express my gratitude for your many prayers and acts of kindness during this time. I continue to pray for you daily. I also add a word of admiration for our staff and volunteers who continue with grace and commitment to do the work of God in our midst. My gratitude overflows for their goodness and service.

My prayer for 2021 is that it is a new beginning for us all. The heart of our faith is the paschal mystery: the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the movement from death to new life. In 2021, I pray we emerge from the tomb, that step by step we are strengthened, vivified, empowered, and sent. Not that the light of faith didn't continue to burn in our hearts and community during the darkness of 2020, but that it may radiate in 2021 like the sun. May the new day dawn!

Peace,

Fr. Jeff