

## **60 Years of Faith and Good Works**

October 30, 2016—The day was September 11, 1956 when a young Bishop with great vision sent a talented priest to an empty plot of land in the middle of Warwick. With faith as his guide, Father Raymond Murphy began the herculean task of building a parish and school from nothing. The land had been purchased by Bishop Russell McVinney, but the family who owned it as a working farm took all of the topsoil with them when they left. Hence the name Sandy Lane!

And so, the work began. With a handful of young, new parishioners and confidence in Divine Providence, Saint Kevin Parish was born. Father Murphy, the first pastor, purchased a small ranch house on West Shore Road as the rectory. Legend has it that there was no furniture in the house save a twin bed and a kitchen table with two chairs. He stored the weekly collection in the freezer until it was counted and deposited, and he took all his meals at the Newport Creamery at Wildes Corner. Mass was offered at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Sandy Lane, and when the crowds began to grow Mass was moved to the gymnasium at Bishop Hendricken High School.

My friends, this weekend we celebrate, almost to the day, the dedication and blessing of our church on October 26, 1966—just 10 short years from that first day

of founding. We do so with gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings of these many years, our thriving and growing parish, and a future that is bright with promise as we continue like those first steadfast and faithful founding parishioners who will be honored at our 10 AM Mass this weekend by our Most Reverend Bishop (Thomas Tobin), we will continue to do our part to build up the Kingdom of God with the work we do here. We honor them, as we honor the Good Lord and His Church, by being faithful to the Gospel that we have been given and that they lived with such stamina and dedication. The challenges were many, but the faith was strong and with faith there is no obstacle too great.

As you may know, this past week I had my opportunity, in a small way, of bearing the burden of our faith and defending the truth of that faith. And, like those who came before us, making sure that the message of our Divine Savior is not drowned out by the clamor of the times in which we live. I am honored to do my part as a priest and as your Pastor, and grateful to so many of you for your overwhelming messages of love, support and, most especially, your prayers. As you know, there were those who disagreed and made it known in both public and private ways and I respect that as everyone's right, but it also reminded me of my mother's counsel when I was a young boy, "Robert, if you are going to hang around with a man named Jesus, you are going to get into trouble."

I am always privileged to be in His company and as we look around this church and our parish this weekend, we can clearly see what real and true faith does and how it always survives the tests of time and scrutiny.

My friends, may we continue the legacy, faith, and abundant good works as we celebrate these last 60 years of parish life so that we can be sure that those who follow us are as proud of us as we are of those who started it all.

God love you.