



Shining for 100 Years

November, 1993

Dear Friend in Christ,

When I was growing up in County Longford, Ireland, it was easy to be a Catholic. Everyone in the village -- all 500 of us -- dutifully went to Mass on Sunday. It didn't matter that the Mass was in Latin, and we had no idea what the priest was saying. And it didn't matter if our pastor's sermon had nothing to do with our lives.

We were Catholic. We did what we were supposed to do.

Of course, there wasn't much else to do. Most of the people in County Longford lived on small farms. Cows grazed on the rolling green hills, and our income came from selling milk to the local creamery.

Today, practicing our faith isn't always easy. I know the problems of living in the real world -- I see them every day. And I want you to know that the Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea supports you as you face them.

Every day, we worry

You worry about money. Many of us live on fixed incomes. And many of us work long hours -- not a healthy lifestyle. But we need the money and benefits, and in today's economy, if we have a job, we keep it.

You worry about your children. They're growing up much faster than we grew up. It would be nice if we only had to teach them to make decisions like good, Christian citizens. But with drugs, violence and AIDS, we must teach them to make decisions that will save their lives.

You worry about your neighborhood. Crime is an issue no matter where you live. But even sadder is the epidemic of isolation. How many of us know the people who live on our street? How many of us are comfortable asking a neighbor for help?

How can we make our lives work?

It's easy to feel lost at times. You probably know someone who is overwhelmed by the problems of life, drifting along with no

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clear direction. Or, someone who has become hardened and cynical, believing no one can be trusted and nothing can change.

Today, we need our faith just to get through the day.

Through our faith, we understand our basic goodness. We recognize that every problem is an opportunity for spiritual growth. And we gain the sense of balance we need to make our lives work.

That's what Our Lady Star of the Sea is all about - faith, strength and Christian love.

**Our Lady Star of the Sea -
my personal love story**

I am truly honored to be here.

In August 1964, with emotions ranging from elation to apprehension, I first arrived at Our Lady Star of the Sea. I was a newly ordained priest, just off the plane from Ireland, and Atlantic City was my first assignment.

To my delight, I was taken in by the warm and wonderful people of this parish. My elation grew, and my apprehension disappeared. Those two-and-a-half years were the beginning of my love story with the people of Our Lady Star of the Sea.

Almost 27 years later, I was blessed with the opportunity to return as your pastor.

Following the footsteps of Monsignor Francis Flaherty will not be easy. He is a spiritual giant who devoted himself to serving you. But once again, I have been warmly welcomed by the people of the parish. With the assistance of my fellow priests, deacons and the wonderful Sisters of Mercy, I wholeheartedly accept the challenge.

Together, standing on the shoulders of those who went before us, we will move forward, building our faith and our sense of community.

Shining for 100 years!

Now, we have a perfect opportunity to look at where we have been, and where, with determination, we will go.

In 1994, Our Lady Star of the Sea celebrates our Centennial - our 100-year anniversary as a parish!

For 100 years, people like you have turned to Our Lady Star

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of the Sea to celebrate the dramas of life - birth, union, death and resurrection.

In fact, it is here that we give thanks for life itself.

Every moment of every day, we are surrounded by generous gifts from God. To appreciate them, all we need to do is open our eyes and our hearts.

This is what we will do, all year long. We will count our blessings.

And drawing strength from the good in our lives, we will reach out to our parish community, offering support to the people who are truly in need: The old. The young. People who, for one reason or another, have trouble coping with life.

Special events all year long

Please join in our year of renewal.

Every month, you will be invited to a special event. Some of them will strengthen your faith. Some of them will be just for fun.

Our first event will be a special Mass at noon on Sunday, December 5, to begin our Centennial year.

Bishop James McHugh will celebrate the Mass with us. Afterwards, you are welcome to enjoy light refreshments in our school cafeteria, located right next door to the church.

The following week, Our Lady Star of the Sea will host a special mission of spiritual renewal for you and your family. The mission, presented by Franciscan Friars, will begin with a family Mass, including Children's Church, on December 12.

Children's Church - making the Bible meaningful to kids

Our Lady Star of the Sea has already begun offering Children's Church to our young people, and for me, the experience is delightful.

While moms and dads go into church, we invite the children to a separate Liturgy of the Word in our school cafeteria. More than 100 kids came to our first Children's Church last month.

Students from our school present a short skit, acting out the day's gospel. Then, I talk to the kids. When I ask them questions

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about the meaning of the gospel, hands fly into the air. They're eager to participate.

Then, I ask the kids what special intentions they want to pray for. One young boy raised his hand and said, "For my family." Another said, "For my grandmother who is sick."

With Children's Church, we are reaching out to our most precious possessions - our sons and daughters. (I wish church was this much fun when I was growing up in County Longford!)

Children's Church is one of many steps we will take this year toward making Our Lady Star of the Sea a vibrant part of our daily lives.

Look for my letter every month

It's going to be a busy year. So every month, I will send you a letter to tell you all about upcoming events and special efforts.

Please join me in making 1994, the Centennial of Our Lady Star of the Sea, a year of emotional, physical and spiritual renewal. I'm sure God will bless our efforts as we set about the business of coming alive!

May the Lord walk behind you and before you. May His strength be a light to you, and may He bless you in everything you do.

Peaceful day,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patrick J. Brady".

Father Pat Brady

P. S. Remember, Our Lady Star of the Sea begins our Centennial Year with an Inaugural Mass on Sunday, December 5 at noon. Please join Bishop James McHugh and your parish family as we celebrate this wonderful occasion!