

Dear Parishioners,

January 12, 2021

*Most merciful Father, help us to know that taking up your Son's yoke is the one true way to find our eternal home in your rest. May your grace help us take up the yoke with joy in our daily endeavors.*

As I reflect upon this prayer and ponder the many changes that we face this coming 2021, I want to touch base and communicate with you in response to the recent article about Seton Youth Shelters that was published in the Beacon on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

As a faith community we recognize the importance of Seton Youth Shelter's mission. We are very pleased to learn that the organization has a donor who is providing them with an opportunity to consolidate all of their shelters and administration offices at one location for the benefit and betterment of the youth in our society, their families, the community and Seton Youth Shelters.

For those of you who may not know the history, in 1984 a combined effort of local clergy, parishioners of St. Nicholas Catholic Church and local citizens formed out of concern for vulnerable and homeless youth establishing "Mother Seton House." In time, Mother Seton House transitioned into a separate 501(c)(3) organization now called Seton Youth Shelters. Throughout the name change and shift into a 501(c)(3), the organization continued to utilize the former rectory(building) located on the property of Saint Nicholas Catholic Church in Little Neck free of charge until 2014 when a modest monthly rental agreement was instituted.

#### 2020

The lease agreement between the Catholic Diocese of Richmond and Seton Youth Shelters may be renewed on a year-to-year basis. The lease term was to expire Dec.31,2020, and in March 2020, the Catholic Diocese of Richmond informed Seton Youth Shelters that due to the pastoral need of Saint Nicholas Catholic Church the lease would not be renewed. The notice offered Seton Youth Shelters more than half a year notice for the organization to find a new place to relocate.

Recognizing the difficulties the pandemic has created and that Seton Youth Shelter is still searching for a new location I consulted with the parish's pastoral and finance councils and offered more time to assist the organization with its relocation efforts. This decision to offer additional time was reached in Sept. 2020 and this newly executed lease extension provides Seton Youth Shelter with housing for their boy's program until August, 31,2021, at its current location.

The former rectory (building) is a parish resource that will be utilized in the future to support the operational and ministerial work of our mission as a stewardship parish in the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. I will be meeting with the Director of Real Estate at the end of this month to conduct an assessment of its condition and begin making utilization plans with parish leadership in preparation for September 1<sup>st</sup>.

We continue to pray and offer our best wishes that the latest opportunity before Seton Youth Shelters as announced by the organization Dec. 10, 2020 is a promising, fruitful one for the organization.

Journeying together in Christ,



Fr. Venancio R. Balarote, Pastor