

REFLECTION ABOUT ST. JAMES

Next Wednesday, August 26, is the date St. James parish was established 114 years ago. Such an occasion is most worthy of celebration, and celebrate we will! When organizing an outdoor event, I work on Plan A and create the “in case of rain “ Plan B. COVID 19 has certainly changed that process this year. I am now working on plan I or J. So many changes have occurred that I forget which letter I’m on. No roasting pigs this weekend. Instead, inanimate pigs are raffle items. No sitting outside eating together; a masked, socially distanced drive-thru affair happens in the parking lot. All of the uncertainty, apprehension and concern about the celebration as well as the stress of the last six months swirled around me. The event was less than a week away. I knew I needed to do something to help me calm down and focus.

One of my favorite centering strategies is walking my dog, Amica. Last Tuesday, we went for a walk. Our route began in the church parking lot and continued across Troost. We strolled past my ancestral home, former school and playground site, the St. James Parish Center (Bishop Sullivan Center) and finished up in the Cloister Garden. The walk changed my perspective. I felt calmer and was able to reflect.

I grew up in St. James Parish. I represent the fourth generation of my family to belong to the parish. The family has gathered at the church for celebrations, funerals, anniversaries and holiday Masses for decades. My five siblings and I were baptized, made our First Communion, and were confirmed there. We were educated at and graduated from St. James School. My parents and three siblings were married at St. James. I was also. So really, I grew up WITH St. James. It was like riding bikes with your best neighborhood friend!

Sitting in the shaded garden, I realized I am a part of the parish. More importantly I know it is a part of me. I think of St. James as being part of my genetic code. Just as the color of my eyes or hair is determined by my heredity, St. James has influenced my decisions, motivation and commitments. I take my faith community wherever I go. St. James - the people and the place - represents different things to different people. To me, St. James is welcome and connection; it is challenge and action; it is faith and hope; it is family; it is home.

So let’s celebrate this weekend. Happy 114th, St. James!