

January 19, 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As is the case for many of you, my mind and heart continue to be burdened by the pain, disappointment and mistrust that are the fruit of the last few years of life in the Archdiocese of Boston. There is a particular and peculiar way in which all of this settles in a priest's heart, in a pastor's heart. My life, my work, my responsibilities and my relationship with those I serve are continually shadowed by our recent history and the reminders that appear so often in the daily papers. Please keep all the priests of the Archdiocese in your prayers - we are very much in need of that important support from you.

Are you beginning to work on your taxes? Parishioners who use envelopes for the Offertory collection will receive statements this week detailing last year's contributions. For the first few months of 2005 while the database was being built parishioners had to use "generic" envelopes that were not dated and did not have their name, address and envelope number preprinted. This led to some difficulties while inputting donations. If you find that your information is not accurate, please call the parish office. We will be glad to make any corrections. Please note that donations to the Grand Annual collection were acknowledged with individual letters and are not included on the 2005 contribution statements.

I'm not sure when the change happened (although it was a while ago) but I'm aware that I no longer feel like a newcomer in our church or in Monument Hall. It's a very good thing to feel at home in both these places. I believe what happens is that the places you make your own become your own... I hope that those who were once new to our parish offices and meeting rooms in West Concord are coming to have the same experience.

I've received word from a young parishioner, Ben Gatti, that The Concord-Carlisle High School's International Issues class is currently doing a project to raise money to promote the education of Cambodian children. Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world and has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Asia. Moreover, during the years of 1975 to 1979, the Khmer Rouge killed 1.5 to 2 million; they targeted educated people. Education can help promote economic development and aid in the continuing recovery from the genocide. Just \$300 will put a student through high school for a year, and \$800 can send a student to college for a year. I will be sending a check from Holy Family Parish for \$300 to support a high school student for a year. Dr. Paul D'Ambrosio of our parish and his father, our deacon, Dr. Frank D'Ambrosio, both have first hand knowledge and interest in the needs of the Cambodian people. You may contact Ms. Samantha Fox-Morrow with questions or donations at CCHS or [sfox-morrow@colonial.net](mailto:sfox-morrow@colonial.net) or speak with the Doctors D'Ambrosio in support of their efforts.

A family in the parish is interested in finding a Catholic or Episcopalian boarding school or day school for their daughter. If you have experience or knowledge about such schools, these parents would be interested in speaking with you. If you'll be in touch with me, I'll put you in touch with the family looking for such a school. Thanks!

At our Parish Pastoral Council meeting this past week I receive advice on several ways to bring some of our financial needs to the attention of the parish. While I had hoped to address those issues in my letter this week, I've decided to wait a week or two as I consider the Council's advice and that of our Parish Finance Council. An update on the Grand Annual collection appears in the bulletin.

It's with regret that I tell you that I will be cutting back on the frequency of my letters. I thoroughly enjoy writing these letters but I usually end up spending a good part of my days off working on them and if I'm to find the balance I pledged in my New Year's resolutions, I need to keep my time off as time off. The demands on my time are many, as you might imagine, and that is a very good thing: a busy pastor is a sign of a vibrant parish! Somewhere down the road we may be in a financial position to increase our parish staff but for now our present staff bears a significant overload of responsibilities. I hope and plan to get a letter to you every other week.

Sincerely,  
Fr. Fleming