

Dear Parishioners,

In October we announced that Canton's two Catholic parishes, St. Gerard Majella and St. John the Evangelist, were requesting permission to merge into a single parish. Cardinal Sean has granted our request. In fact, he has approved over a dozen such requests in our Archdiocese. A full list will soon be published in *The Pilot* and we will include a link on our website.

We have also entered into an agreement with an architectural firm, Habeeb and Associates, to conduct an assessment of our facilities. At some future point we envision consolidating into a single worship site. We are confident that either facility is sufficient to accommodate worshippers.

I am pleased to announce that the name of Canton's new parish will be **St. Oscar Romero!** St. Oscar Romero is a saint of our times. Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of San Salvador, the capitol of El Salvador in the 1970's. He was an outspoken proponent of the rights of the poor and marginalized. He was a pacifist who opposed violence on all sides of the political divide. He was assassinated by a military hit squad while saying Mass in 1980. It was widely believed that it was in reaction to his support for human rights. He was canonized in 2018. We can and will learn more about our new patron saint in the months and years ahead. There are lots of good websites with information about him, his life and martyrdom.

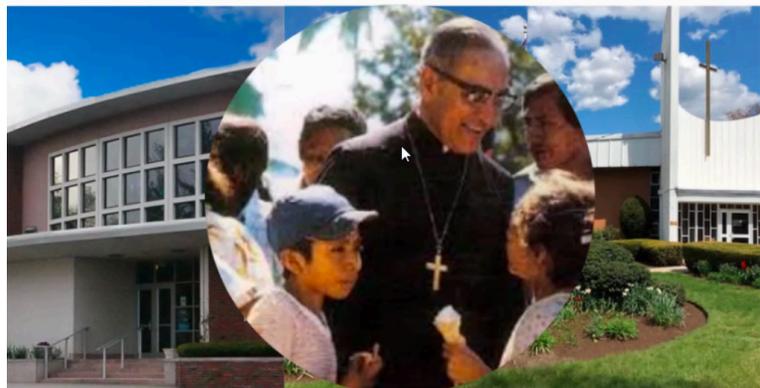
If we were not confronted with the COVID crisis we would probably have delayed the choice of a name and engaged in some form of parish consultation. However, the inability to gather made meetings impossible. Importantly, we did not have the financial capacity to delay the merger until after the virus is behind us. We will be the first Saint Oscar Romero in the Archdiocese and perhaps one of only two in the country.

To learn more about him, his life and his ministry, I recommend the 1989 film, *Romero*, starring Raul Julia (PG-13). We have ordered several DVDs which we can circulate and it is available on popular streaming services. Additionally, Cardinal Sean was personally acquainted with him. At some future point, when we reach our long awaited return to normal, I will invite Cardinal Sean to Canton to share his perspective and experiences of the saint with us.

In the days and months ahead information and updates will be shared through our bulletin, e-newsletters, website and social media. I realize it may seem a bit confusing but for now, we will be one parish *St. Oscar Romero*, composed of two churches, *St. Gerard Majella* and *St. John the Evangelist*.

Yours in Christ,
Father Tom

"Let us not tire of preaching love;
it is the force that will overcome the world." Oscar Romero



Saint Oscar Romero Parish
Canton, Massachusetts