

## A VERBAL HANDSHAKE FROM THE PROTO-CATHEDRAL'S PASTOR

**G**reetings from the Northern bank of the mighty Columbia River. It is truly impressive to stand on the edge of this great expanse of water as it flows west towards the Pacific Ocean. Perhaps in the near future you too will be a direct witness to this natural wonder with a visit to the Northwest.

The parish members of this beautiful Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater are very proud of their place of worship. The *cathedra* of the Archbishop may no longer be here, having been moved to Seattle, but the prayers and hymns of over a century and half of worship linger in the air.

The souls of all previous generations of people, I trust, are present at every Mass celebrated here and their voices too become part of the symphony of praise lifted up to God. Someday your voices too will become part of the harmonies that fill this sacred space.

The I-5 freeway runs north to south just a few blocks east of the church. It will be well worth your time to take a brief side trip from your journey north or south, to kneel and say an *Ave* as your eyes take in the variety of images before you.

Our patron, St. James the Greater, is a good host and offers a joy filled blessing to all who enter through the front doors. His statue shares space with Our Lady and St. Augustine on the high altar.

There are vestiges of the Canadian and European backdrop to the foundation of the Church here in the Northwest. We today are privileged to pass on the Faith that we have received. How can we refuse to show respect for the tremendous efforts of those who were the Charter members of the Church in the Northwest?

Like St. Paul, we are able to say "...we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us." *2 Cor 4:7*

This Proto-Cathedral continues to be a vibrant church where the work of evangelization is ongoing. The baton of history has been passed to us and dare we be half-hearted in our efforts to infuse the Vancouver area with the message of Christ?

Missionary work never stops until Jesus has been preached to the ends of the earth. In closing then, my hand reaches out to you over the internet to welcome you and invite you to at least visit if not stay and become one of us. The Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater has a seat for you and the Sanctuary Lamp will remain lit, waiting for you to cross our threshold.

As the Irish say: *One Hundred Thousand Welcomes.*

Fr. Martin Bourke

Pastor