

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It's been some time since I've given you an update on my health. January 29 will mark one year since my bariatric surgery to enable weight loss. You might recall that in the 4 months prior to surgery I lost 33 pounds eating three times a day, consuming only healthy foods - and no munching between meals. Since surgery I've lost another 154 pounds for a grand total of 187 pounds. In that same time frame my collar size has gone from 22 to 16 and my waist from 62 to 38. I have regular follow-ups with my surgeon and nutritionist and they are both pleased with my progress - and I've never felt better in my life! I'm told that at some point my weight loss will plateau and, indeed, it has definitely slowed down. For several weeks over Christmas and New Year's I was at 199 and I thought might have been my plateau but since January 1 I've lost another two pounds. As I've reported to you before, the transition to a radically new relationship with food and eating is not one that I've found difficult. The rewards of being faithful to my diet plan and to exercise make it all very much worthwhile. Every aspect of my life has been impacted and positively so by this change. I am altogether grateful for this and have no regrets at all - except that in retrospect, I wish I'd done this many years ago.

I'm very grateful, too, for your support and encouragement - that has meant a great deal to me and has been helpful to me as I adapt to a new way of living. As I've written before, if anyone considering weight loss surgery would like to speak to me about it, I'd be more than happy to do so.

I hope that within a week or two I'll be able to give you an update on the progress of our plans for our parish properties, namely the office at 55 Church Street and the rectory in Monument Square. Things are moving along well and I'll soon be ready to report more details on this effort.

And yet another update! I'm frequently asked when Holy Family Parish and St. Irene Parish in Carlisle will become a collaborative ministry which one pastor and one parish staff serving both faith communities which will remain individual parishes. All parishes of the archdiocese will eventually become collaboratives and this is happening in phases. The new collaboratives for 2017 were announced this past fall in phase five of the process and the Concord-Carlisle collaborative was not included. That means that it will be at least nearly another year before that might happen. (A new phase of collaboratives is announced in the fall, with those collaboratives being actualized in June of the next calendar year.)

Over the past month you've heard me speak and have read in the bulletin and seen at the doors of the church information on our parish *Year of Service*. The materials we've given you offer an overview of all the service opportunities in our faith community- and they are many! Our hope and prayer is that each parishioner will take some time soon to discern some way or ways in which he or she can be of service to the Lord, our parish and to those in need. You'll be hearing more about this as time goes by. If you've missed the last couple of bulletins, please go online - if only to learn just how many opportunities to serve are yours in your own parish. (HolyFamilyConcord.org)

Not an update here, but rather a great **THANK YOU** to all who helped make our Advent and Christmas liturgies and outreach so great. Join me in praising God for the generous service rendered by: our parish music ministry; our liturgical ministers (lectors, altar servers, ministers of the Eucharist); our sacristans; all those who decorated the church for Advent and Christmas; the stable crews who put together our indoor and outdoor nativity scenes; those who organized the Giving Trees, food pantry donations and prison gift efforts in this season of giving; and all those who offered hospitality on the church steps for the town's annual tree lighting. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming