

November 2009

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

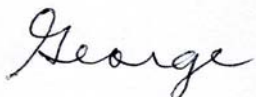
November marks the end of one liturgical year and the beginning of another. The year we are ending has been filled with crisis: international conflicts, an open-ended war on terror, massive government spending to restart a sputtering economy posting high unemployment, and signs that our political and social fabric is under real stress as public debate tests ordinary civility.

As church, as a people of faith, we bring all this to the altar. Only with God's help can we emerge from crisis with confidence and a sense of direction. To begin again— as we do on the First Sunday of Advent at the end of the month— is itself an act of faith. The ancient story will continue. The great narrative of God's love for us, revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, is how we interpret world events, the struggle within our church, our own personal hopes and fears. God is in all these things and will never fail us.

In November, the church also invites us to reflect deeply about our continuing relationships with our beloved dead. (*You'll notice an attachment to this e-mail that includes a beautiful poster of the Marianist deceased of the last year, prepared by Fr. Richard Wosman.*) They have gone before us. Our deceased family members, religious sisters and brothers, and friends have completed the journey we are on. They now know everything, and they turn to tell us, "Pay attention. Don't miss life's true purpose or neglect your own path to holiness." We would do well to pray for them and with them these November days and to ponder once again the depth of the Paschal mystery in our faith lives.

Attached are some of the liturgical celebrations for the month. Of special note is November 6, the Memorial of the Marianist Martyrs of Madrid. As we remember their ultimate sacrifice for their faith, let us pray for all those who stand boldly for gospel values in our own day. May we continue to become living witnesses of joy and hope for one another and for our world!

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George".

George J. Cerniglia, S.M.
Assistant for Religious Life