

## *29th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Firefighters Larry Leggio and John Mesh lost their lives while battling a blaze here on Independence Avenue this week. While the city is in mourning, Fire Chief Paul Berardi said these hopeful words: “They did not die in vain. They saved two civilians, carried them out of the second floor on ladders, before the wall collapsed.” We pray for the families affected by this tragedy, and for all firefighters who face dangers for the safety of our community.**

**Those who die in the line of duty remind us of martyrs in the Church. From the early martyrdom of Stephen in Acts of the Apostles to the recent martyrdom of Oscar Romero in El Salvador, the Church has paid tribute to those who gave their lives for the sake of the gospel. Martyrs do not die in vain. They lose their lives, but they help save others. Tertullian wrote in the second century, “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Their death does not kill faith; it grows faith. Today is Mission Sunday, when we support those who bring the gospel to other lands, even where it meets hostility.**

**Those who first brought the gospel to northeast Kansas City were not killed for their faith, but they underwent other sacrifices when they moved here as immigrants to build this church. This past week we observed the 93rd anniversary of the construction of this church building, first dedicated to Mary as the Church of the Assumption. Twenty-five years ago this coming February we became known as St. Anthony’s. The change restructured our membership, finances and properties, which caused much sacrifice, but from it has grown the vibrant community we know today.**

**In a few weeks our work will continue under the oversight of a new bishop, James Johnston. Bishop Johnston spent several days last week with the priests of our diocese, and we believe that he will be a great shepherd for us, an answer to our prayers. He wants to visit parishes as soon as possible. Bishop Johnston says he cannot converse in other languages, but he can celebrate mass and preach in Spanish, and he has joined the Vietnamese community at their annual gathering in Carthage. Bishop Johnston is originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, and he has served the past eight years as bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau in southern Missouri. He has many friends there, so it is a sacrifice for him to leave his home and move here to take care of us. But he has graciously accepted this request of our Holy Father Pope Francis.**

**Firefighters, missionaries, founders of churches and bishops all have to suffer, but their suffering is never in vain because of all the good it does.**

**Today’s first reading from Isaiah concerns a servant who suffers in order to achieve the will of the Lord. Isaiah says of the servant, “Because of his affliction, he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many.” We hear it today because in the gospel Jesus announces that he has come to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus gave the ultimate example of how the suffering of one can bring redemption to many more.**

**Not all of us will die for others. But we all suffer for others. Suffering is easier when we know it is not in vain. When we accept suffering for the sake of others, we bring life to the church and the world.**

*Sunday, October 18, 2015*