

### ***Happy Easter! Alleluia!***

*The Lord is truly risen, alleluia! To him be glory and power for all the ages of eternity, alleluia, alleluia!* Those words are the Entrance Antiphon for the Mass during the Day of Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord. How aptly those words sum up our overflowing joy at this central feast in our liturgical year and in our Christian life. Truly, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is everything to us! Through our crucified-risen Savior we are saved and made free! Let the shouts of *Alleluia* ring out loudly today!

I take his opportunity to wish all of you a very Happy Easter, and I am joined by the entire OLPH Pastoral Staff in wishing you and your family many blessings during this fifty-day season of resurrection and new life. To those former parishioners who may be back, and those young people away at school who have returned home for Easter, we are very glad to see all of you again. To friends and family members of our parishioners who are visiting and worshipping with us, we extend a heart-felt welcome! To our own parishioners who are joining us but who perhaps do not come to Mass regularly, we want you to know how glad we are that you are with us today. We hope that you will be inspired to join us in worship on a more regular basis. *This day was made by the Lord; let us rejoice and be glad!*

Easter is our greatest feast and the center of the liturgical year; it's important for us to make sure we give it the centrality it deserves. Look for a special **Easter Time insert** elsewhere in this bulletin that explains the meaning of the season and highlights some important liturgical elements. Also in this bulletin we have included a special ritual for **Blessing Your Home at Easter**. I encourage each and every family to pray that blessing together at home.

### ***Octave of Easter—Music at 12:15 p.m. Weekday Mass this Week***

This week coming up is the Octave of Easter, as the joy of Easter Sunday continues to be celebrated in an intense way; each day this week has the liturgical rank of Solemnity. The *Glory to God in the highest* continues to be used each day this week, as does the solemn dismissal at the end of Mass with its double alleluia.

(These elements end on weekdays after the Second Sunday of Easter.)

Since our custom here at OLPH is to celebrate Solemnities celebrated during the week with music at the 12:15 p.m. daily Mass, we will have the joy of having music at this Mass every day this week on these Solemnities which are the Octave of Easter. *Alleluia!*

### ***First Communions at Sunday Masses***

We are entering the time of year when we celebrate First Holy Communions. Our Saturday celebrations will be on the first two Saturdays in May, in a couple of weeks, and this year we are continuing another option for families: families may choose to have their child receive First Holy Communion at a pre-selected Sunday parish Mass. This is a beautiful and wonderful experience, an option which met with a great positive response last year and which many families have chosen to take advantage of this year also.

Think about how appropriate it is for First Holy Communions to take place at a Sunday Mass, since Sunday is the day for the Eucharistic gathering of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is especially meaningful to have a First Communion at a Sunday Mass if a family usually attends the same Mass every Sunday; then the community of faith, the people with whom that family worships every Sunday, can be a part of the child's special day. It's a great way for the child to make the connection between what she or he does for the first time and what she or he will be doing for the rest of his/her life, namely, participating in the Sunday Eucharist. It reinforces the idea that faith is not something individual, but rather it is communal, and that initiation (Eucharist is one of the Sacraments of Initiation) takes place within the context of a worshipping community founded in the Sunday Eucharist.

So, over the course of the next several weekends, you may have children making their First Holy Communion at a Sunday Mass in which you are participating; in fact, it begins next Sunday, April 27 at certain Masses. Be joy-filled about this special event in the life of that family and this great moment in the life of the parish. In addition, don't be shy about going up to that child and family to congratulate them

about this wonderful event, and to express to them how much such an occasion deepens our own faith and draws us closer together in the Body of Christ, the Church.

***In conclusion...***

Together, let's aim high in Christ.  
Together, let's bring out the best in each other.  
Together, let's be the best we can be in Christ.

And let's always remember: LOVE IS A  
GIFT.

Sincerely,