

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Next weekend we begin the Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 9:30 a.m. Mass each Sunday; read all about it in the insert elsewhere in today's bulletin. We are very excited about this new liturgical outreach to the children of our parish and we think it will be an important component in helping to form them liturgically so that they can fully participate in the Mass and draw closer to the Lord Jesus. Remember that this is geared toward children in first-grade or older, and it does not involve their parents coming to the separate chapel; parents remain in the main section of the church for the Liturgy of the Word.

Remember too that we have other components geared toward children's participation in the Mass: we have children's envelopes available for them to use, and we hand out children's bulletins at the end of the 9:30 a.m. Mass. We hope that all of these initiatives assist parents in the spiritual formation of their children.

New Liturgical Ministers

We are continuing our push for new liturgical ministers — ushers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and readers. We NEED you and we WANT you to participate. When you think about how important these ministries are to the reverent and full celebration of our liturgies, you understand what a tremendous gift you are giving to the parish by offering yourself in one of these roles! On top of that, you would be deepening your spirituality and your relationship with the Lord. The time is NOW for YOU to say, "YES, I will do this!" It's easier than you think, and the rewards are...out-of-this-world!!!

Altar Server Recruitment

In addition to the liturgical ministries mentioned above, we are also recruiting a new group of altar servers and we are getting ready to begin new training sessions for them. We encourage all boys and girls in fourth grade and older to become altar servers. Parents: what a great thing you would be doing for your child by encouraging him or her to become an altar server! Information can be found elsewhere in this bulletin.

THANK YOU for the Fuel Collection

I'm not telling you anything you don't already know in saying that this has been one of the most difficult winters in years. The spells of sub-freezing, near-zero temperatures, the relentless onslaught of winter storms, and the accumulation of snow all have everyone longing for the days of Spring, which cannot come soon enough. The parish, as you might presume, has incurred additional costs related to snow plowing, snow removal, and heating because of the extreme winter weather.

That's why I take this opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to all those who made the effort to contribute to the extra "fuel collection" by using the extra envelope provided or by donating for that purpose through Faith Direct. That additional money has been a big help to us in not experiencing a set-back as we have tried to move forward in restoring OLPH to financial health. I continue to be awed by the overwhelming generosity of OLPH parishioners, especially since I know so many people are finding finances difficult in their personal life. Even with whatever struggles you might be facing, you continue to make financial support of OLPH an important part of your life and an expression of your commitment to your faith.

I am so very grateful to you for all the assistance with our winter fuel collection!

Combined Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Council Meeting

This week, on Tuesday, February 25 (weather permitting!!!) we will be holding a joint meeting of the Pastoral Staff and the Pastoral Council. Pastors are encouraged to hold such a meeting once a year to facilitate interaction between these two groups.

The topic for this meeting will focus on a review of the ME-25 survey results (the survey we took back in October, and about which you have been reading a brief blurb from time to time). We will use the results of that survey to do some long-range planning for the future, devising pastoral priorities that will seek to deepen parishioner engagement in the life and mission of the parish. I am grateful to the members of the full-time Pastoral Staff (the names listed on the cover of the bulletin) and to

the members of the Pastoral Council for the time and energy they are committing to this undertaking, and to their leadership as a whole.

I consider the Pastoral Staff, the Pastoral Council, the Liturgy Committee and the Finance Committee to be the four main leadership bodies in the parish that I look to in providing counsel and input to me as Pastor; they are the groups that work with me in determining our directions and our priorities.

My Little Black Book

No, not *that* “little black book!” (It may only be people of the older generation who get that joke!) Remember the Little Blue Book we had for Advent, which had spiritual reflections for each day of the season? Well, I am happy to announce that, due to the positive feedback we heard about those books, and the way they were so well-received, we now have a **Little Black Book for Lent**.

The book contains spiritual reflections and simple thoughts to guide us in our journey through the days of Lent. I invite each parishioner to take one and to use it as the basis for daily personal prayer and reflection during Lent.

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,