

### ***Lent is underway!***

So, with this First Sunday of Lent we are underway in our Lenten season for this year. Please take some time to read the special insert in this weekend's bulletin which explains many of the liturgical and spiritual components of this season. We want to make sure we make the most of Lent, and so I encourage everyone to make full use of the many opportunities for communal prayer and devotion as advertised in this bulletin. The Lord wants to lead you on a journey of deeper communion with Him and of fuller communion in the life of His Church. Take advantage of this time of grace and reconciliation so that come Easter you will be open to the new and resurrected life the Lord wants you to share in.

Here's a tip I would like to share with you: don't wait until the last minute at the end of Lent to go to Confession! You can avoid the long lines by going earlier during Lent at the many opportunities for Confession. Try not to wait until Holy Saturday, when the time slotted for Confessions, and priest availability, is limited. Look toward an opportunity before that, especially on Monday of Holy Week, April 14, our diocesan "Reconciliation Monday" when priests and Confessions will be available all afternoon and evening. Plan ahead!

### ***Bishop Murphy's Pastoral Letter***

I urge everyone to read Bishop Murphy's latest Pastoral Letter *The Harvest is Plenty*. We had copies available last week on the pew ledges, although they may all be gone. Segments of the letter appeared in the Sunday, March 2 edition of *Newsday* and will be appearing again today, March 9, and next Sunday, March 16. You can also find the letter by doing to our parish website, which has a link, or to the website of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, [www.drvc.org](http://www.drvc.org), or to the website of *The Long Island Catholic*, [www.licatholic.org](http://www.licatholic.org). Also, a copy of the letter will be published in the next issue of *The Long Island Catholic* magazine. So, there are plenty of opportunities to read this important letter in which our Bishop continues to offer us important reflections and teachings stemming from the diocesan-wide "Belong More Deeply" initiative in which the diocese has been engaged over the past several years.

### ***Last Chance to Sign Up to Become an Altar Server***

Boys and girls fourth grade and older: this is your last chance to sign up to become an altar server! Sign-ups are due to me no later than this Tuesday, March 11, so that we can begin our training sessions. Make sure you send your response form to me today or tomorrow; the information is elsewhere in this bulletin.

### ***Capital Campaign Update***

We are working hard to bring all aspects of the Capital Campaign undertaken several years ago to successful closure. I offer heartfelt apologies for the amount of time it is taking and for the certain amount of confusion that has arisen around it. The campaign was undertaken before my arrival here, but even so, as your Pastor, I feel responsible for it. Upon my arrival, I received some conflicting information and found that records were incomplete. The situation, much to my chagrin, is taking much longer to bring to completion than I am happy with. I have turned the entire situation over to our Business Manager, Deacon Tom Bast, and he is working diligently to settle everything once and for all. If you are someone who donated to the Capital Campaign some years ago and feel as though your donation and memorial have not been brought to successful completion, I ask you to please contact Deacon Tom at [tbast@oloph.org](mailto:tbast@oloph.org) as soon as possible. We want to know about it and need to know about it in case we have incorrect information. I promise you that my goal, which I am aggressively enforcing, is to have everything settled before this summer. I again offer my apologies to those who are unsatisfied and who have been inconvenienced by this.

### ***Protecting God's Children Update***

Another area that I found was neglected and in disarray was our record-keeping concerning our compliance with the Virtus/Protecting God's Children Program as required by the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and so since my arrival as Pastor we have been working hard to bring this into proper order. As I have mentioned before, this has been placed under the leadership of Jean Bjork, who has

agreed to be the Coordinator of this for the parish, as she makes sure that all our documentation is in 100% compliance with what the diocese requires. You may receive a letter noting that one or more of the requirements still need to be completed by you as someone who offers time and service at OLPH. If you receive this letter, I ask you to accept it in a spirit of cooperation and good humor, and with a willingness to help us do what we are required to do. Any questions about this can be directed to me or to Jean at the rectory.

### ***Our Life Together***

I recently heard a great quote written by Archbishop Anthony Mancini, Archbishop of Halifax and Apostolic Administrator of Yarmouth; Archbishop Mancini wrote:

“The Church cannot be a collection of individual believers, practicing their faith in private, satisfied with their self-sufficiency. To be the church is to be a living organism, a body alive with health and strength, where every part is necessary and where each part cooperates harmoniously with every other part so that the body moves and lives with purpose and direction.”

I love that quote and think it sums up well the direction we are setting here at OLPH. As you know, we are working hard to move away from “turfs” (or “bailiwicks,” which has become the new favorite word!) and away from individual, isolated ministries and groups, to instead work toward building up a unified parish vision where everyone is more committed to the whole. Next week I will talk more about some concrete things that have taken place and steps that will be taken to move us toward that goal.

In the meantime, think about how that quote applies to you and to your role in the Body of Christ that is OLPH Parish.

### ***Parish Mission at St. Mary, East Islip***

Starting tonight (Sunday), I will be giving the Parish Mission at St. Mary’s Parish in East Islip along with my classmates Msgr. Jim Vlaun, Fr. Frank Nelson and Fr. Michael Holzmann (this is the same Mission we give throughout the diocese and which we gave here several years ago). The Mission is four nights

long, Sunday through Wednesday. Please pray for the success of this Mission.

### ***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,