

Thank You for Your Work on the Video!

I take this opportunity to thank **John Keller** for all his great work and assistance with the Catholic Ministries Appeal video we showed at all the Masses last weekend. John is a member of the Pastoral Council and this is the second year in a row he has offered his time and talent in preparing the DVD and in assisting with showing it at the Masses on the weekend. Thank you, John, for your offering which will help to make the Catholic Ministries Appeal a success once again at OLPH! It was a great help to me personally.

Catholic Ministries Appeal

The Appeal is well underway here in the parish, and we will begin publishing results in the bulletin from time to time. I offer a sincere and heart-felt **THANK YOU** to all who have already participated in the Appeal, and I urge those who have not yet done so to please join in with a pledge or a one-time gift. You will be supporting the great work of the Catholic Church on Long Island, and you will also be helping OLPH as we share in the monies once we reach and surpass our goal.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

You've been hearing about it and reading about it — our Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 9:30 a.m. Mass is beginning in just two short weeks, on March 2nd. The Children's Liturgy of the Word Committee has been working very hard to bring this to fruition, and I thank everyone who has given of themselves so generously to make this a reality. We have been training homilists to preach to the children, and we have been training shepherds who will assist in guiding the children to and from the separate chapel and who will provide supervision during the experience itself. We have been working hard to refurbish the north sacristy so that it can double as an appropriate chapel space for the Children's Liturgy of the Word, and we have been recruiting musicians to provide appropriate liturgical song. Thanks to all who have offering themselves in these endeavors!

We're using this as our focus to enhance the celebration of the liturgy for children, and the Children's Liturgy of the Word is geared for children in first grade and older. Read more

about it in the separate insert in this bulletin. Next week we will have a special "Open House" after the 9:30 a.m. Mass for families who want to see the chapel where the children will go and for those who might want to find out more about it.

New Liturgical Ministers

We are continuing our push for new liturgical ministers — ushers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and readers. How important these ministries are to the reverent and full celebration of our liturgies! What a gift you would be giving to the parish by offering yourself in one of these roles! What an opportunity it is for you to deepen your spirituality and your relationship with the Lord by offering yourself in this way! 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!!!

Enough Already!!!

About a week ago I reached the limit. That's it...I've had it. *I am done with winter!!!* Most people I talk to feel the same way too! I have always been a warm-weather person and I will never complain about 90-degree heat in the summer.

I like to think that each winter there's a spiritual lesson for me to learn. Whether it has to do with perseverance, or entering into the mystery of the death-like aspects of winter so as to be able to experience the resurrection of springtime and summer, or using the darkness and grayness of winter to deepen my trust in the abiding light and presence of Christ, I find these days spiritually challenging. What about you?

I wait with longing for Ash Wednesday and the beginning of our Lenten season, since those days begin to mark time in a significant way toward the renewal and rebirth that comes with Easter.

Topics to Address?

In case you didn't realize it, I would like everyone to know that parishioners are welcome to send me questions or ideas for topics they would like me to address in these Pastor's Columns. I'll be up front and tell you I cannot promise I will address every idea that is sent to

me; the selection process will be very subjective. As you have seen, I am especially interested in using this space to do education and formation about liturgy, so questions and suggestions for topics about our celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments would be especially welcome. The purpose, of course, is not to turn this into a “respond to griping” column, but if there are questions or insights or topics or clarifications you would like to see addressed, I’d be happy to entertain your suggestions. As you know, I consider this column to be a major and important vehicle of communication between you and me, as your Pastor, and so I would like to make the most of it that is possible.

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,