

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, next Sunday, February 2

Next Sunday is February 2, which is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, so we have the opportunity to celebrate a Feast of the Lord on a Sunday, something which occurs once only every several years. As you will recall, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is also called Candlemas Day, because of Jesus being declared by Simeon as “light” and “glory” for the people. The day is associated with the blessing of candles and with processions with candles.

Here at OLPH we will mark the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord next Sunday by using a special Solemn Entrance which will include a blessing of candles and holding lighted candles. In addition, blessed candles will be available to take home at the end of Mass.

I urge you to look for the **special insert** which is appearing in this week’s bulletin which gives more detailed information about the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and its liturgical meaning and celebration.

Catholic Ministries Appeal 2014

As you know from my homily at Mass, we are launching the **2014 Catholic Ministries Appeal** this weekend. I once again must ask each and every parishioner to consider participating in this diocesan Appeal as a major priority.

Your response to last year’s Catholic Ministries Appeal was overwhelming! Our goal in 2013 was \$112,000, and we went way over — we achieved 120% of goal — with the last tally of actual payments totaling over \$131,103. **That is a testament to the wonderful people of OLPH!** Because of **your goodness**, the parish received rebate payments totaling just over \$37,000. That income has been extremely important to us as we work hard to return the parish to financial health. Quite honestly, we have planned on again receiving rebate money in our 2014 budget, so we are really counting on you once again. First and foremost, though, allow me to once again say **THANK YOU** for your generosity in supporting last year’s appeal. OLPH parishioners are indeed the best in the world!

I now once again find myself in the position of asking for your generosity, your

cooperation and your participation and we kick off this year’s Catholic Ministries Appeal. Our goal for 2014 is, surprisingly, lower than last year’s: **our goal this year is \$108,800.** (*I’m not complaining!!!*) Think about what that means: **if we can at least match what we did last year, our sharing in the rebate will be that much more profitable, since we will reach goal earlier. If we can raise more than we did last year, the direct profit to the parish will be even greater!** I ask you, then, to contribute to the Catholic Ministries Appeal, and I ask this for two main reasons.

First, it’s the right thing to do, because we are Catholic. Remember, what gives us our Catholic identity is that as a parish community we are in a communion of communities within the Body of Christ which is the local Church of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, under the leadership of our shepherd, Bishop Murphy. Our identity as a Eucharistic community does not rest in our own individualized communion with Jesus, but rather *in our communion with one another in Jesus.* Our communion with one another revolves around the diocesan Church. Therefore, we have the obligation to participate in the work of the Church beyond just our parish. The money does not go to the Bishop! It goes to good works of the Catholic Church on Long Island that is done on the larger diocesan level.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal supports the crucial and critical work of bringing the message of Jesus and the concrete works of the Gospel to people throughout all of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. **Your monetary donation to the Appeal means that you are supporting works and ministries that are too large for any one parish to handle and that can only be done on the diocesan level.** Some examples of this are: Catholic Charities, which serves tens of thousands of people who need help with food, clothing and shelter; the formation of over 113,000 young people in our diocese through programs of catechesis and religious formation; the formation of thousands of college and high-school students through Youth and Campus Ministry programs; the formation of 14 men who are studying to become priests and 30 who are studying to become deacons for the Diocese of Rockville Centre; and many, many more great

programs that bring a Catholic presence to Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

The second reason, however, is indeed parish-based: support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal is at the same time support of our beloved OLPH Parish. That's true because of the rebate formula. Once we reach our goal of **\$108,800**, we receive 20% of that money back as a rebate; right off the bat, that's \$21,760 in our pocket. Then, after that, we receive back **80% of all monies collected over goal.** If we can match last year's total, we will receive back a total of **over \$39,000.** I cannot stress enough how important this income would be toward moving us further along to financial health. We have started paying down our debt; we have been able to spend some money to keep up with much-needed maintenance of our buildings and grounds and to expand our parish programs — in other words, we have made real progress. You can help us to continue to move forward. We are counting on this income, and you can help us achieve it through your participation in the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Once again I am extremely grateful to Bob Dobres, chairman of the Appeal for our parish. In the name of the parish, I thank Bob for the time and energy he puts in to making the Appeal such an important and successful endeavor here at OLPH.

I myself give to the Catholic Ministries Appeal, because I believe in it, for the good work it does throughout Long Island and for the many ways it helps our own parish. I hope you will give to it, too. As important as the amount of the monetary pledge is the number of people participating in the Appeal; the key to success is to have a large number of participants. **Not everyone need pledge a large amount (although large amounts will certainly be gratefully accepted!); what's more important is for a large number of people to pledge something.**

I thank you for your participation in this year's Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Snow Shovelers!

As I write this column, snow is falling quite heavily outside, and our maintenance crew is doing a great job of trying to keep up with the shoveling. Deacon Don Stamm is our Facilities

Manager, and Vito Cudia is the head of the maintenance crew. I wish to thank them for their leadership and their vigilance in coordinating our snow removal efforts. Kudos and deep appreciation must go to R.J. Renna, Dylan Brady and Sean McDonough who do the backbreaking work of shoveling and blowing the snow so that our sidewalks, driveways and entryways are as clear as possible. We all know how difficult it is to get that kind of a job done, especially in frigid temperatures and icy winds while the snow is still falling, and our guys are diligent, hard-working, and generous with the time they put in here at OLPH. **Thanks to all of you for your efforts!** We, and I in particular as your Pastor, deeply appreciate not only what you do, but also the spirit of graciousness and cheerfulness with which you do it!

9:30 a.m. Mass: March 2nd — The Children's Liturgy of the Word!

The start of the Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 9:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, March 2nd is coming closer and closer! A detailed explanation of what it's all about will appear in the bulletin in a few short weeks. We're looking forward to starting this important liturgical outreach to our children. Parents: tell your kids to look forward to this! Kids: tell your parents you want to participate in it!

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,