

A Transitional Time of Year

We often talk about the Christmas holidays being the busiest time of year, but it seems as though May and June could offer some real competition to the winter holidays in terms of a hectic pace! We have been experiencing First Communions and Confirmations, with their attendant festivities, and now we seem to be in the midst of “graduation season,” high school and college. I take this opportunity to offer congratulations, blessings and best wishes to all who are graduating from some form of education at this time of year. May this time of transition be for you a time of excitement, growth and discovery of the importance of your gifts and talents.

We are experiencing some transitions of our own in several of our ministries here at OLPH. After offering many years of generous and extraordinary service, Debbie McDonough is stepping down from coordinating our Family Life Ministry, and will also retire from assisting in coordinating the Altar Servers. Louise Perrotta is stepping down as President of the Legion of Mary after her years of capable and devoted leadership. Joe Illuminato is leaving his position as President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society after many years of wonderfully offering himself in that role, a service that flowed from his commitment to serving the poor and neediest among us. I am grateful to Debbie, Louise and Joe for the tremendous impact they have had on the life of OLPH through the offering of themselves through their time and talents.

Those ministries will, of course, continue at OLPH. We are currently exploring exciting new possibilities for the continuance and growth of our Family Life Ministry, and I will soon be finding someone to assist me in the coordination of the Altar Servers. Marie D’Angelo will, at least temporarily, take over for Louise in the Legion of Mary, and Deborah Deasy will be taking over for Joe in St. Vincent de Paul. My thanks to you who will make sure a seamless transition occurs during this time of new leadership!

Pastoral Formation Institute Graduates

On Wednesday evening of this week the Diocese of Rockville Centre will be celebrating the graduation ceremony for those adults who

are completing a course of study in the Pastoral Formation Institute (PFI), and I will happily be in attendance at the ceremony. The Pastoral Formation Institute of the Diocese of Rockville Centre is a two-year process of personal, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation for adult Catholics. Parishioners who go through PFI are an asset to their parish because of the deepened sense of faith and deeper knowledge of our tradition that they bring to their ministries, in addition to the insights into pastoral ministry they obtain.

I am proud to announce that this year we have Joan Baffa and Vito Tandoi completing the two-year program. I am very grateful to them for the time, effort and sacrifices they have made to give themselves to this program of formation, and for the enrichment they will bring to their ministries at OLPH. Congratulations, Joan and Vito; OLPH celebrates your accomplishment!

I consider those who go through PFI to be a great gift to the parish, and so I ask many more parishioners to think about enriching their faith by attending the diocese’s Pastoral Formation Institute. If you would like more information about it, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to discuss it with you. I would like many parishioners to go so that our parish can benefit from your deeper formation.

Summer Appeal

Letters went out this past week announcing our second annual **SUMMER APPEAL**. We began this endeavor last year, and it was met with great success. Like last year, this year’s **SUMMER APPEAL** will be a crucial part of the ongoing support and stewardship that you provide as we continue down the road toward financial stability.

As you know, the way the **SUMMER APPEAL** works is very simple: it is a direct request for your help, with no meetings, no time commitment on your part, and no phone calls. Every dollar goes directly into the parish operating budget to meet ongoing day-to-day expenses. It takes the place of a summer carnival and therefore saves us any costs that would have to be paid to outside vendors. Every dollar stays right here in the parish.

Keep in mind that OLPH is like most parishes in that attendance, and therefore

collection revenue, traditionally goes down over the summer months. However, the parish has the same bills to pay, and therefore the **SUMMER APPEAL** becomes an important part of keeping a balanced budget.

Believe me, I wish that as your Pastor I did not have to ask for money; it is not one of my favorite things to do (I would rather be planning great and uplifting liturgies for us to celebrate!). As I do so, however, I want you to know first and foremost that I already recognize and sincerely appreciate how much you are already giving to OLPH on a regular basis. Also, I recognize that many of you continue to feel the effects of our poor economy and poor job situation, and some of you are only beginning to get back on an even keel after Super Storm Sandy.

Last year, I requested that each family set aside a little more than one dollar (\$1) per day during the time of what might be considered the “summer months” from mid-June through Labor Day, and therefore I asked you for a donation of one hundred dollars (\$100) to the **SUMMER APPEAL**. Because the response was so great last year, I will ask only for the same amount. However, if you can give more, I will be very grateful. Many parishioners responded positively to my request last Fall for \$1 more in the weekly collection. In that same spirit, if you can increase your donation to the **SUMMER APPEAL** to \$105, I would very much appreciate it. Of course, if you must give less, I appreciate your sacrifice in giving whatever you can.

I thank you greatly and express my heartfelt appreciation for your participation in this year’s **SUMMER APPEAL**.

New Administrative Assistant to the Pastor

I am happy to announce that we have hired someone to function as my Administrative Assistant. Josephine Vagelatos has begun working in that position, and we are happy to welcome her on board at OLPH.

When I arrived here in June of 2012, Patti Chavis, the Parish Secretary, graciously agreed to take on, in addition to the duties she already had, further administrative work to assist me and, therefore, for all intents and purposes, to function as my secretary/administrative assistant. As you can imagine, however, as I have become more and more rooted in OLPH,

the demands of being my administrative assistant have grown exponentially, and it became more and more burdensome for Patti to do two jobs at once. A careful analysis of our improved financial situation showed that we could handle paying for a part-time position without benefits (as we all know, it’s the benefits that are quite expensive).

So, effective immediately, Josephine will now be Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, and she will be handling those duties for me. I know you will all extend the same kindnesses and courtesies to Josephine that you have extended to Patti as you work with Josephine from this point forward. Patti will continue to handle all the duties associated with being a parish secretary (the requests for the facilities calendar, general messages, sacramental information, parish databases and contributions, working with the receptionists, *etc.*) and Josephine will pick up all the duties that are directly related to assisting and supporting my ministry as Pastor. I am grateful to Patti and wish to publicly thank her for her generosity in assuming these extra duties for these past two years, which she did with good humor and a spirit of openness to serving the good of the parish. Thank you, Patti!

Patronal Feast Mass

Save the date: next Thursday, June 26, at 7:30 p.m.! That’s the date and time we have chosen for this year’s Patronal Feast Mass, to honor our Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and to celebrate our life together as a parish. Mass will include honoring the parish icon in the Entrance Procession, an offering of food for the poor (as we did at Thanksgiving and at the Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper), and hospitality afterward. Please mark the date and plan on attending.

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,