

### ***Parish Leadership Meeting***

Last Saturday, March 22, was another extraordinary moment in the life of OLPH as the heads of all the various parish ministries, organizations and societies all came together, along with the Pastoral Staff, Pastoral Council, Finance Committee and Liturgy Committee, for a special Parish Leadership Meeting. The meeting, lasting the entire afternoon from 1:00-4:00 p.m., was a time for these leaders of OLPH to come together to begin to look at the direction OLPH is taking into the future.

The theme for the day was how we can all work together better to build up the unity of the parish. As mentioned in the report given to us after our Parish Visitation last December, there is a need for the various groups in the parish to work together to have more of a common parish purpose and a parish vision larger than just their own concerns.

After beginning the meeting with Midday Prayer and an icebreaker exercise, I offered a major presentation on the theme of unity and how unity is the foundation for our mission as a parish. As our foundation, our unity in Christ is both expressed by and deepened at our celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, which is the center of our life. The meeting went on to explore some practical applications of building up unity in terms of some of the policies and procedures for parish groups to follow. Then, there was the opportunity for discussions among all the participants to explore the question of how we can begin to foster a greater sense of cooperation, interaction and unity.

I believe the day was very fruitful for all who participated, and I thank everyone for their commitment of time and energy to make the meeting a success. However, this meeting was only a small first step. There is much follow-up work to be done in the months and even years ahead in order to continue to move us all on toward being more deeply united in our mission of living the Gospel.

### ***A Lenten Friday: Soup Supper and Choir Presentation on April 4***

This Friday evening, April 4, our parish will have a beautiful opportunity to come together in our common journey of Lent to enter into an evening of spirituality and reflection. As

advertised elsewhere in the bulletin, our music ministry will offer an evening of Scripture and song on the theme of the Passion as found in St. Matthew's Gospel. This presentation will be preceded by a parish Soup Supper, a very common and popular Lenten exercise. I encourage everyone to come to both activities, or at least to one if you cannot make both. Such communal experiences are an important part of our Lenten journey.

### ***Plan Ahead: Celebrate the Triduum***

Speaking of communal experiences, I want to begin to urge you now to make specific plans to attend the liturgies of the Sacred Paschal Triduum: the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening, April 17; the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, April 18, at either 3:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.; and the Solemn Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night, 8:00 p.m. on April 19. In addition, Morning Prayer is celebrated each of those days at 9:00 a.m. in the church, and there is the diocesan celebration of the Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m. on Holy Thursday morning at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre.

The days of the Sacred Paschal Triduum are the holiest days in our liturgical year, and they are the days that form the heart of who we are, giving us our identity as Christians who have been redeemed and saved through the death and resurrection of Christ. These days should not be business as usual, but rather should be days set apart and days "outside of time" as we enter deeply into the Lord's Paschal Mystery.

I invite you to begin now to make your plans; think about it ahead of time so you are prepared: how will you make these days different from other days? How will you mark this special liturgical time, and how will you arrange your life so you are free to attend the special liturgies? You'll be glad you took the time to prepare for a powerful immersion into the Sacred Paschal Triduum.

### ***Little White Books available next weekend***

We are journeying through each day of Lent assisted by the reflections in the "Little Black Book" which many people are using. However, the 40 days of Lent are only part of the "Great 90 Days" of the Lent/Easter mystery,

and we should commit ourselves to daily reflections throughout all 50 days of Easter Time, in the same way as we have been doing throughout the 40 days of Lent.

We will have available for you the “Little White Book” which gives daily reflections for each day of Easter Time. Books will be available on the pew ledges starting next weekend. I hope you find this book as helpful to your spiritual life as so many have found the “Little Blue Book” for Advent and the “Little Black Book” for Lent to be so enjoyable.

### ***Catholic Ministries Appeal Witness Talks***

Next weekend we will have parishioners offering brief witness talks at all the Masses after Communion, sharing their insights about the importance of, and why they participate in, the Catholic Ministries Appeal. As you know, the funds raised in the annual Catholic Ministries Appeal are important not only to support the work of the Catholic Church in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, but also because those funds directly support OLPH in the form of rebate money we receive from parishioners’ contributions. We are doing well in this year’s Appeal, but continued support is necessary. I thank you for the attention and consideration you will give to your fellow parishioners as they speak at Masses next weekend after Communion.

Additionally, I wish to say **THANK YOU** to all who have already donated and made pledges to the Appeal. Your support and generosity are greatly appreciated and are a sign of your commitment to your faith and your love for OLPH. As your Pastor, I am personally very, very grateful for your goodness.

### ***A Week of Meetings***

The week ahead will be a week of meetings in one form or another, which, although not always the most desirable aspect, are nonetheless a necessary part of working in the Church. Fr. John, Fr. Ethel and I will be attending a diocesan Priests’ Conference one day this week; these Conference days are held regularly for all priests of the diocese. Also, we will have one of our monthly parish Pastoral Staff Meetings this week, on Tuesday. Beyond that, Chris Ferraro and I will be in Albany on

Wednesday and Thursday, for a meeting of the regional chapter of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, of which we are both members. My head should be spinning more than usual at the end of this week!

### ***Joyful Events: April Carbaugh and Robert Becker***

There are some joyful events coming up this week, too. On Friday, April 4, our Coordinator of Faith Formation, April Carbaugh, will be celebrating her marriage to Mr. Anthony Kleinlaut at a 4:00 p.m. Nuptial Mass at St. Bernard’s Church, Levittown (April is from Levittown). They have honored me by asking me to be the presider at the Mass and to receive their vows, which I am thrilled to do. So, after Friday, our Coordinator of Faith Formation will be Mrs. April Kleinlaut! Congratulations to April and Anthony; we wish you many, many years of happiness and grace in your sacramental marriage!

The second joyful event this week involves Mr. Robert Becker, who is in formation for the Diaconate. Many of you know Robert as one of our finest Readers at Mass; Robert also coordinates the Readers, is a member of the Liturgy Committee, conducts wedding rehearsals with his wife Carmel, and has been the overseer for our participation in the Gallup ME-25 Survey process. This coming Saturday, April 5, Robert will be formally installed in the liturgical ministry of Reader. This institution in the stable ministry of Reader is different from being a parish Reader, as this formal institution is done by a Bishop and is one of the liturgical steps necessary in the process of formation toward being ordained a deacon. This is a significant step in Robert’s formation as a deacon, where he is asked to embrace the Word of God in his heart and in his life ever more deeply. I will have the privilege of being a concelebrant at this Mass of institution.

We congratulate Robert and his wife Carmel and their family, and we promise to keep him in our prayers as we look forward to having him serve here at OLPH in the future as a deacon, when he is ordained.

***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,