

Sixth Sunday of Easter

The Fifty Days of Easter Time continue; let's not tire of reflecting on and celebrating the great gift we have been given as people who share in the death and resurrection of Christ. *Alleluia!* Our Collect (Opening Prayer) for today's Mass sums up well what and why we continue to celebrate, as it speaks of our joy in memorializing Christ's resurrection, our celebrating that resurrection in the liturgy, and our asking that the grace-filled effects of Christ's resurrection will permeate every aspect of our life: *Grant, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy, which we keep in honor of the risen Lord, and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son...*

Deacon Don Stamm retiring

It is with mixed emotions I announce that as of this Saturday, May 31, Deacon Don Stamm will be retiring and will therefore no longer be working as Facilities Manager here at OLPH. Deacon Don has been at OLPH for seven years as Business Manager and, most recently, as Facilities Manager. Deacon Don exercised his diaconal ministry in his home parish of St. Agnes in Rockville Centre and was a valued member of the Pastoral Staff here at OLPH from Monday through Friday.

My mixed emotions come about because on the one hand, I am happy that Don, in his retirement, will now have the time to relax more and enjoy things like golf and spending more time with his family; he has earned it! On the other hand, we will miss his presence here very much. Don was always a very pleasant and cheerful presence here in the parish. He made a significant contribution to the life of OLPH. Deacon Don was with the parish through some difficult times, and he has been a part of its renaissance as well. We all should be very grateful to Deacon Don for the service and good work he has given us. We will continue to benefit from the fruits of his labors for many years to come.

Deacon Don and his wife Priscilla are moving out to Jamesport on the East End of Long Island to enjoy what I'm sure will be many happy years. We wish you the best, Deacon

Don; may your retirement years bring you many, many blessings! Know that you will always be a part of the OLPH family and that you are welcome here any time.

Hospitality Committee

I'm happy to share with you the news of a new ministry that has formed here at OLPH, a **Hospitality Ministry**. Although hospitality has been offered in the parish for many, many years by groups such as the Christian Mothers and the Family Life Committee, this new Hospitality Ministry offers an innovative approach that I think affords us even greater opportunities. The fact is that over the past two years there has been a significant increase in the number of occasions at which we want to have hospitality (namely, food!) at or after some parish event. As Pastor, I LOVE that this has happened! It shows how we are growing, and what a vibrant community we are. It shows how much we enjoy spending time together as parishioners, getting to know one another and building each other up as the Body of Christ.

However, this has meant an increase of work and has created a need for greater coordination of these types of things. Thus, emerging from discussions among the Pastoral Staff, the idea of a Hospitality Ministry was born.

The idea of the Hospitality Ministry is that there is a central group — a “clearing-house” or “core team,” so to speak — who bring together different individuals and ministries when hospitality is needed. Notice the emphasis we are giving here: **“bring together.”** This new Hospitality Ministry is another avenue for us to build up the unity of the parish, to get folks to know each other better and work together better for the common good, and to reinforce the idea that ministry does not belong to any one person or group, but is the responsibility of all of us working TOGETHER. The members of the Hospitality Ministry will coordinate the details and the bringing together of the people and groups that will be responsible for a particular hospitality event.

There's one other thing the Hospitality Ministry will have responsibility for, and that is organizing the supplies and materials related to hospitality in our parish. Members of the

Hospitality Ministry will help to maintain the kitchen (located in the basement of the school) and our new Hospitality Cart in the new building of the school. They will take inventory, follow up on cleanliness, *etc.* As a part of this, all the supplies, which do not belong to any one group but rather belong to the parish, are being consolidated together into one; it's more cohesive this way, and it's more cost efficient if we purchase as one.

I am very grateful to Peggy McCloud and Christine Ferris who head up this new Hospitality Ministry, and to Fr. John who coordinates things as the Pastoral Staff liaison. This is yet one more example of how the great parishioners at OLPH make us a model parish for the diocese! If you would like to offer yourself in working as part of the Hospitality Ministry, please come forward and say so! We would love to have you.

Memorial Day

This Monday, May 26, is Memorial Day. How important it is for us to take the time to honor those who have given their lives fighting for our country and who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may enjoy the freedoms we have and which we hold so dear in our beloved United States of America. Although the day is associated with the unofficial start of the summer season and we will be enjoying the day with family and friends at barbecues and other gatherings, let's be sure to take some time to offer a prayer for those who have died in the cause of freedom. Printed elsewhere in this bulletin is a prayer you can use.

I will be marching in the Lindenhurst Memorial Day Parade with our OLPH Knights of Columbus. As their Chaplain, I think it's appropriate that I march with them.

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord—Holy Day of Obligation

This Thursday, May 29, is the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord and it is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. Notice the word "obligation" — that means we are required to participate in Mass this day, the same as every Sunday. Consult elsewhere in the bulletin for the Mass schedule.

With the Ascension we celebrate something not apart from the Easter mystery, but rather something deeply rooted in it, as we acknowledge that the Risen Christ has taken his place in the highest heavens. As one of the Prefaces of this Mass tells us, the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, the conqueror of sin and death, ascended "not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before." What a beautiful aspect of the Easter mystery is presented to us with the Solemnity of the Ascension!

Novena to the Holy Spirit

After the Solemnity of the Ascension, the Church begins a period of time which is the original Novena — we begin nine days of intense prayer to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I am so pleased that our parish will be praying a Novena to the Holy Spirit; look for details elsewhere in the bulletin, and be sure to join in this urgent and fervent prayer.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, it is with great joy that we celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation this Saturday, May 31. Bishop Robert Brennan, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar General of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, will be here to administer the sacrament to our 8th-graders. These young people have worked hard to prepare for their Confirmation. This past year we instituted a new process of preparation for Confirmation involving special "workbooks" with requirements for various formation experiences. The point of this was to form the young people into a deeper engagement in parish life in particular and the Christian life in general. Remember, readiness for a sacrament involves not only knowledge and intellectual preparation, but also growth in Christian living and continued participation at Mass.

Part of the candidates' requirements was to write a letter to me as their Pastor requesting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. I read each and every one of those letters and responded to each one. I was edified to read what the young people wrote and I was pleased to see that so many of them felt they had grown

in their relationship to the Lord because of the Confirmation preparation process.

Please take some time this coming Saturday to pray for all the young people who will be confirmed.

Update on Repaving of Parking Lot

Work on the repaving of the south parking lot, and on resealing the other blacktop areas on campus, continues, although not as quickly as we were originally planning. Although we have not encountered any disasters, as always with these types of projects there have been a few unexpected developments that delay progress. I thank you for your continued patience and good humor. I assure you we are keeping on top of things to get the work done as quickly as possible and to minimize your inconvenience.

Meeting for Ushers

All ushers are reminded that mandatory meetings for all ushers are being held Monday, June 2 at 7:45 p.m. and Tuesday, June 3 at 3:00 p.m.; you choose ONE meeting to attend. This meeting will afford the opportunity for spiritual formation for all ushers, and business items will also be discussed. We look forward to seeing you there. Please be sure to contact Mike Williams if you cannot attend to let him know the reason you cannot be there. Thank you.

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,