

From The Pastor

A good time was had by all last Sunday as we celebrated the milestone wedding anniversaries and as families gathered to enjoy 'pumpkin' activities sponsored by the Youth Group. Many children had their faces painted, played pumpkin bowling, and did some painting on their own. Couples enjoyed cake and company with fellow parishioners and family alike.

Thank you to all who planned, coordinated, facilitated, and cleaned up. These kinds of events nourish and strengthen our parish life, and I am grateful for those who made it all happen.

Thank you for your prayerful support and kind gifts on Priesthood Sunday. At the ten-thirty Mass, I was presented with two gifts from all of you by Sandra Swanson, Parish Council president. Because of the length of the Mass, I did not take the opportunity to open the gifts immediately. I received a reversible stole, green on one side and purple on the other. I would be wearing it today except that the day calls for white vestments. I also received a new alb. The alb is the white garment worn under the outer garment, which is the chasuble. Both of these items are very frequently used, and I am very grateful for your thoughtful kindness.

The vocations of Marriage and Priesthood richly and essentially support one another. As the People of God, we all play an essential role in living out the life of Jesus in the world today. Let each of us pray for the other, so that the Kingdom of God will be clearly seen in our midst.

We begin today to collect non-perishable food items for several families in the parish who will receive baskets for Thanksgiving. This is a wonderful and obvious outreach that makes visible and tangible our service and commitment to the gospel. As a Christian community, we can make our voices be heard through kindness and sharing in a world that to often turns a deaf ear. Both children and adults are asked to bring items appropriate for a nice Thanksgiving meal. Items should be brought to the altar during the offertory. Baskets will be put together the last weekend before the holiday, and delivered to those families most in need.

Another opportunity for outreach has come to our awareness. The Senior Towers on Dequindre has been looking for quite some time for 'phone pals' or willing 'friends' to call or visit many lonely and homebound residents. I was sorry to hear of so many lonely and isolated people so close to us, yet happy to learn of the opportunity we have to make a difference in so many lives. One of our parishioners is currently setting up a 'phone pal' system for those who wish to reach out to a lonely person in need. What a perfect opportunity to share a few minutes that could make a world of difference in another person's life. Here is another face of the Respect for Life issue that reflects a generous stewardship as followers of Jesus. It reveals a wonderful care and reverence for the lonely and those who live alone. Keep an eye out for updates and opportunities to respond to this need.

We recently completed roof repairs on two sections that have consistently been leaking. This was an \$11,000.00 dollar necessity. Thank you to all who are faithfully keeping up with their weekly offering. Please be as generous as possible so we can stay close to our budget.

Talks continue with two interested parties who wish to rent our school building. I am confident one of these parties will soon make a proposal that will be acceptable to us and to the Archdiocese. Please pray that the Lord bring this process to a fruitful end, or should I say a new beginning.

Today celebrates the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, (Feast of all Souls). This feast originates early in the Church (636) when the monks in monasteries were directed to offer Masses for all the faithful departed. Before long, a Mass for the dead became an annual occasion for the whole Church. As recent as 1970, this Mass for the faithful departed took a higher place in the Roman Missal when it was allowed to take the place of a Sunday liturgy; which is why we are celebrating it today.

The purpose of this Mass is not only to remember our loved ones who have died, but more importantly to be reminded of our hope and trust in eternal life and the promise of Resurrection. Death is a great mystery of life, yet essential to it. The cycle of life includes death and rebirth. The annual cycle of seasons is a very visible expression of this reality. In a spiritual way, we die throughout life so as to find the rebirth of a maturing self. Most humanly, our final death will cause sadness and grief, causing a deep change in the bonds of love sown with the deceased. Yet, these bonds of love do not unravel at death, but are experienced in a new way. Death is not the tragedy of a final ending, but the hope and promise that a faithful believer is now free and whole in the Kingdom of heaven, realizing a fulfillment of all that has been longed for.

This feast is a rich opportunity to express our love for those who have died, and to focus our hope in the promise of heaven through the Resurrection of Jesus. Please be sure and write the names of your deceased loved ones in the Book of Life at the front of Church.

Father John Esper