

From the Pastor's Desk

Evaluating Parishes: As our core team continues to meet, the Pastoral Council thought it would be helpful for the parish to see how the evaluation actually is proceeding. At this point our evaluations are more general in nature. For example, in our materials there are many statements about parishes, and we determine whether our parish does that area well (and give it a + sign) not so well (giving it a - sign) or just okay (and give it the letters OK). Here are some examples:



All sacramental celebrations involve well-prepared sacramental ministers.
Parish leadership and membership are formed in a vision of evangelization based on Church teachings.
The parish provides excellent catechetical and formational experiences for all age groups.
The parish has programs where all are expected to share their talents and insights such as activities for families, separated, divorced, single parents, widowed, etc.
The parish staff and Pastoral Council receive ongoing formation for their particular missions.
The parish works jointly with nearby parishes in scheduling weekend Masses.

Parish Surveys: Please remember that we need your completed parish surveys by next weekend. For our core team to do its job well, we need input from the people of the parish, so be sure to fill out the survey and return it to the box in the gathering area by next weekend.



Lector Workshop... is this week Thursday at 7 pm in church for all parish lectors. With the new Roman Missal, the Church's hope is that the Scriptures will be proclaimed in such a way "as to promote meditation." And then, after the first reading, the second reading, and the homily, everyone in church is expected to take a full minute of silence and meditate on what they've just heard. This new expectation will require a different approach to proclaiming Scripture during Mass. In fact, it's challenging in two ways. For one thing, it's still public speaking (which has certain needs) but it's also supposed to facilitate meditation for 250 people. We'll go over both of these areas at the lector workshop, and we'll do some practicing. Lastly, there's also the lector's unique role with the intercessions. With the petitions, lectors are no longer proclaiming Scripture; they're leading prayer. Thus the question: what should a person do with their voice when leading prayer for a church full of people? As you might expect, doing this has its own set of needed skills, and time permitting, we'll look at this area at our workshop. How we pray profoundly affects how the Mass feels, and our workshop will address one of the questions that our core team evaluated: *Ministers of the Word (lectors) regularly receive opportunities to grow in their understanding of the power and value of Liturgy.*



Back to Ordinary Time: After the great celebrations of the Christmas Season, we now have several weeks of Ordinary Time to reflect on the life of Jesus and our vocation as his disciples. The gospel readings are from Mark's gospel, which was the first gospel to be written down. It's also the shortest. The term *ordinary* refers to the fact that on the Catholic calendar, Sundays are ordered. That is, they're numbered. For example, this weekend is the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time. Unlike Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, Ordinary Time is not really a season; it's a time between seasons. We'll hear the Lord call his disciples and several accounts of him healing the sick as well. The color in the sanctuary turns back to green, a symbol of healthy growth.



Family Funeral in Grand Rapids: This past Tuesday I presided over the funeral liturgy of my Grandmother's last sibling at St. James Church in Grand Rapids. Uncle Rich was 85 and enlisted in the navy as soon as he graduated from high school. He was assigned to an aircraft carrier in the Pacific, and his job was to help planes land on the carrier flight deck by using two hand-held flags. After the Japanese surrendered, his ship sailed into port in Japan and recovered thousands of American prisoners of war. Upon seeing the condition of the freed Americans, Uncle Rich later said that he couldn't believe that human beings could be so skinny and sick, yet still be alive. Whenever I visited with him, I could always see my Grandmother in his face. At the cemetery, the navy veterans gave him a salute by firing seven rifles three times. They put the cartridges in a little velvet bag for my aunt, and folded up the flag that had been draped over his casket. Uncle Rich was the last of four children to die, but we all felt at peace, knowing that he's finally reunited with his parents and siblings. Since it was a traditional Polish funeral luncheon, there was plenty of kielbasa, sauerkraut, and homemade horseradish sauce to go around.

A Strange Winter: Parts of Alaska have seen over 15 FEET of snow, but Traverse City set a new record last Wednesday with a temperature of 53 degrees. It's hard for me to imagine what it must be like for the people in Alaska. Fifteen feet of snow here would bury the rectory! My mother told me her summer flowers were coming up. Hopefully we'll still have a normal winter. Spring is great, but in January?

Have a good week,

Fa. Petz

pmjvlad@yahoo.com

www.bealcityparish.org

