

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

Dear Friends,

I am pleased by the quality of the liturgy, music and environment at St. Patrick.

Last week I announced at Mass that I was seeking to recruit volunteer Sacristans to assist with the set-up for weekend Masses. A Sacristan checklist of activities assures that vessels, books, candles, microphones, and the altar are all ready for each liturgy, I was pleased to be approached by a high school volunteer. I am still hoping for other volunteers.

I've also noticed that at St. Pat's, a single Lector reads both the First and Second Readings at Mass. What I am used to is having sufficient Lectors so that there are two at every mass, one for each reading.

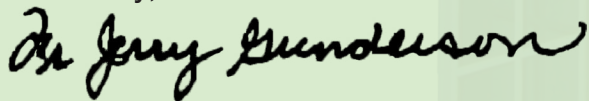
In the fall I would like to reintroduce Communion from the Cup at the weekend Masses. To do so requires additional Ministers of Communion. Communion Ministers must undergo training and certification, and scheduling.

What I am getting at is that the full participation of members of the assembly is required for each liturgy. Liturgical ministers perform roles of service for the entire congregation. I know you want quality celebrations. We would all like to see the numbers at Mass on Sundays increase. I seek your willingness to serve in liturgical and other roles of service.

Attending to the needs of families with young children has been a way to grow the congregation in my experience. Even better is providing nursery care for infants and toddlers. Jesus says, "Come away with me and reflect for a while." How can parents with very small children do that when their primary role is parenting? A Sunday nursery would provide respite for an hour a week in which the parents can focus on their relationship with God. It prepares them to be better "first teachers of the ways of faith to their children."
(From the Rite of Baptism for Children)

A second means of attending to the needs of families with small children is the Liturgy of the Word for Children. Immediately after the opening prayer of the Mass the children with their catechist are called forward by the priest and dismissed to a designated area where they listen to the Mass readings on an age-appropriate level. The children are invited to reflect on the readings with the catechist and then profess their faith. When they return to the assembly at the presentation of the gifts, they are usually happy, and we are happy to have them back. I am very pleased that two volunteers have stepped forward and have begun planning to reinstate Children's Liturgy of the Word in the fall. They need more volunteers too! Watch for details in the bulletin.

Sincerely,



Fr. Jerry Gunderson