

Jan. 14, 2018: Sacramental Programs and Parish Vision

Dear Parishioners,

I thought as we begin a new year I would like to report on some of our parish activity. In 2017, 56 were baptized, 53 received First Communion, 22 were confirmed, 7 couples were married, and 92 received anointing of the sick. Presently we have 262 children in our school, 164 in Religious Ed. programs, 59 preparing for First Communion and 35 in the Confirmation class. There are 13 people in the RCIA program, and we celebrated 41 funerals in 2017.

We are delighted and blessed to have so many people in our sacramental programs, and reviewing these numbers is a good reminder to keep those in prayer who are preparing to receive the sacraments in our parish community. The sacraments are special openings to God's grace and are meant to help us grow and mature in the spiritual life and our relationship with Our Lord. If the sacraments are to be fruitful parishioners need to be engaged in the life of the parish community, especially the Eucharist. Often the sacraments are celebrated as moments of passage in the life of the person or family and do not serve to enrich the faith life of the person. Every parish in the United States struggles with this lack of engagement as culture becomes more secularized.

This past year the Pastoral Council has been reading a book together called "Divine Renovation" by Fr. James Mallon. The thesis of the book is presenting ways to move a parish from "maintenance" to "mission"; that is, how to more fully engage the parish on many different levels and to move from being members to active disciples. The experience in North America is that the models of parish life of the past do not seem to be working anymore, and statistically the Church is experiencing a fairly rapid decline, especially among young people.

I think we are at a point in time when either an attempt is made to make a change, or continue to decline as a church. Through a process of discernment, the Pastoral Council unanimously agreed to set out on a journey with the prayerful guidance of the Holy Spirit to come up with a long term vision or plan for our parish based on some of the ideas we learned about in "Divine Renovation". A proposal for a Holy Rosary long term vision is being drafted by the Pastoral Council and the parish will be invited to provide feedback and participate in the development of the final parish vision.

In Christ,

Fr. Vincent