

Letter from the Pastor

I wish to take this opportunity to speak about some very important things concerning our parish community.

As many of you know, a great deal of effort has been made to address areas of parish life and infrastructure in order to better meet the needs of our parish, our school, and our community. Facing a serious lack of hired staff at the church, we have, since September of 2022, welcomed a new Business Manager to oversee areas of personnel and accounting in the church and school; a new, full-time sexton to help manage the care for our cemetery grounds and the monuments of our beloved dead; we have contracted help for a new marketing person, who will help us build upon our initial efforts to streamline and better highlight our community life and events through our new website, social media, and local media; we have very recently hired a new Director of Sacred Music & Liturgy, who is quite excited about working with our talented parishioners to renew our ministry of liturgical music; and there are currently plans to expand a part-time catechetical position into a full-time Director of Religious Education to more effectively oversee CCD, RCIA, school religious curriculum, and opportunities for youth and ongoing adult faith formation.

We have increased the involvement of our students as ministers for daily Mass, training them as servers, lectors, and even ushers, and a short time ago welcomed a new crop of altar servers into the ranks—who are quite excited, I might add! Our school is flourishing, and thanks to your generosity, the school's Annual Fund is already far more successful than recent years!

In the midst of all of this, we have also been working on launching the first part of the diocese's "Living Christ Campaign" in our parish, which will be presented publically in more detail later in March. In the meantime, I am personally so grateful for those volunteers who have already given so generously of their time to help reach out to our parishioners in person about this important initiative for the future of the faith in Northwest Ohio!

In eight months, we have seen the start of a truly positive transformation for the future of our parish community! These successes are, I have no doubt, the result of so many sincere prayers and the efforts of so many of our parishioners as together, we do our best to cooperate with God's Holy Will. Thank you!

However, whenever communities experience so many changes as we have over the past few years—changes in leadership or staff, the medical and social struggles of a global pandemic, ever-shifting worldviews—changes can be uncomfortable or even traumatic for some who once found safety and stability in certain patterns of life. These are realities that we should always be comfortable discussing, and always in a respectful and truthful way, so as to avoid gossip and slander. I wish to thank so many of you who have done precisely that, because your insights and faithfulness are great assets to our community. That is why it has been with great sadness that several mischaracterizations and miscommunications have come to light that I have a responsibility to address, and which I hope will find some much needed clarity here.

In order to ensure proper accountability for all financial transactions of the parish, we have re-enforced a previously standing and standard procedure of filling out purchase and reimbursement requests, which are then submitted to the school or parish offices for administrative approval. This process does not now, nor has it ever, target any particular person or group. Rather, it applies to every employee or group associated with the parish as a standard accountability practice. Not all requests are approved.

For some time now, there have been two groups of volunteers who would clean the church in alternating shifts on Friday mornings. They have always done a fine job, and so many of them are also engaged in other areas of parish life. However, the parish also regularly pays a member of our maintenance staff to carry out these very same duties every week in addition to the cleaning of parish offices, church basement, and parish rectory. This overlap caused, at times, unnecessary friction and confusion about what was being done and who was doing it. After much consideration, I decided, in consultation with staff, that it would make the most sense to free our volunteers from doing a job on Friday mornings that was already being done, and I am grateful for those who expressed their understanding.

Very recently, I was approached by one member of the Altar/Rosary society who informed me for personal reasons that she and one other were stepping down from organizing funeral luncheons for families of the deceased. Without any further discussion on the matter, this person took it upon herself to call other volunteers of the luncheons to inform them that I no longer required their services. This is false, and yet because of this misinformation, I have had to inform the funeral homes that we must temporarily suspend this much appreciated volunteer ministry to our grieving families. If you have helped with this ministry in the past and would like to continue to do so, please contact the parish office.

Finally, whenever requests are made to publish any form of advertisement in our bulletin or on parish/school grounds, they are subject to review. As pastor, it is my responsibility to consider, in consultation with my staff, such requests when they are presented. Among the most basic criteria such as timing or available advertising space, there is also a strong desire to avoid promoting anything that is either contrary to our Catholic principles, or which could be a source of confusion for those who read such promotions in our parish bulletin. For example, it would seem contrary to our Lenten practices of abstinence from meat on Fridays if we were promoting a Friday chicken barbeque, would it not? Such is the reason that the practice of the parish 'fish fry' began—to publically promote the Lenten observance of the Christian faithful with a convenient means of helping them to fulfill it.

In spite of these difficulties, I remain tremendously proud and grateful to work alongside so many dedicated families who sacrifice so much for one another and their faith, in good times and challenging times alike. Let us continue to pray for one another, and to support each other with the abiding love that the Father has shown us in His Son.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Albert Beltz